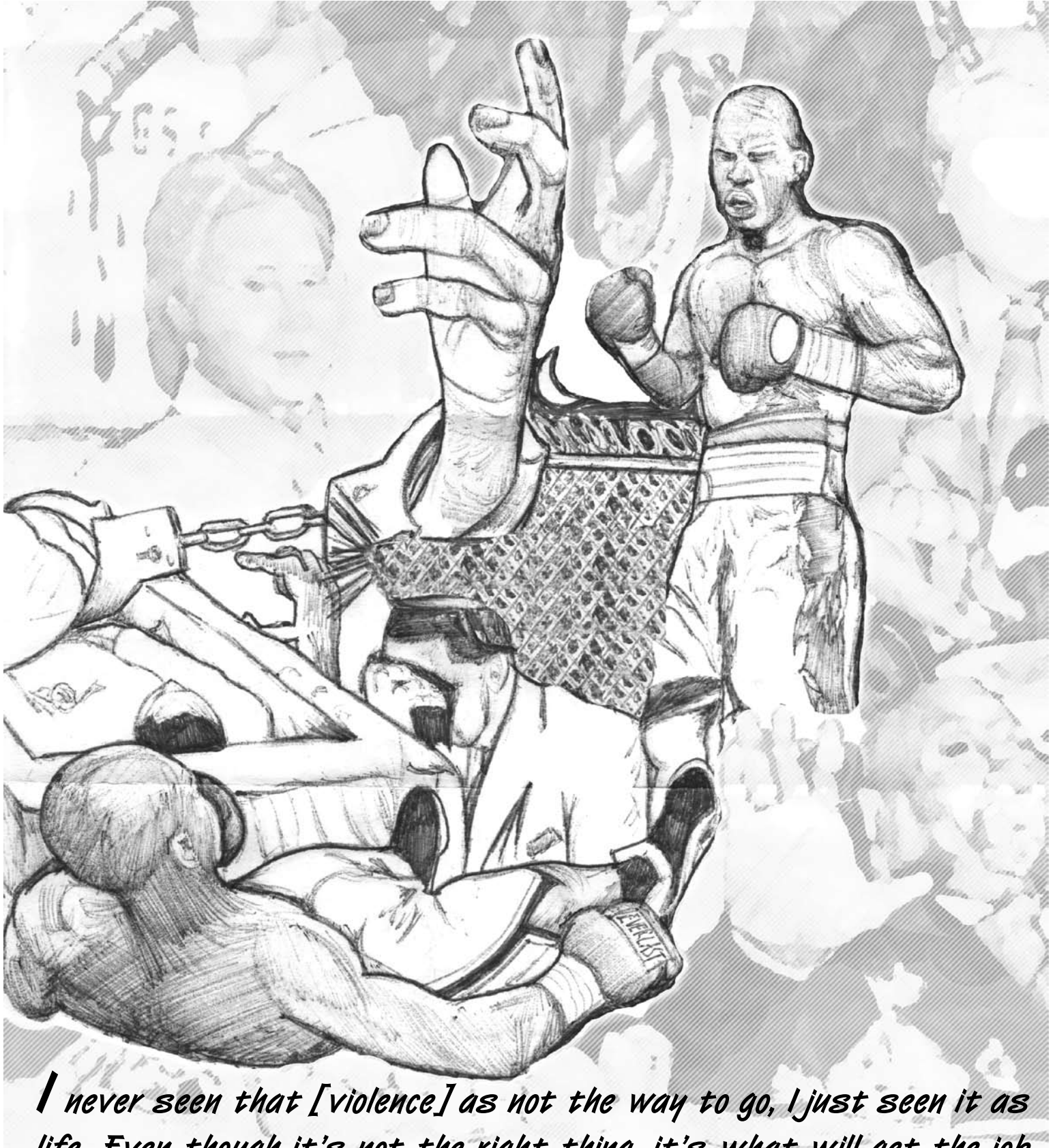


# ***The Beat Within***

THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 13.22



*I never seen that [violence] as not the way to go, I just seen it as life. Even though it's not the right thing, it's what will get the job done and get your stripes on these streets. It's what my ninjas taught me.*

*read the rest of Young Chue's POW on page 5*



**Sometimes at the beginning** of the Beat week, we look at this blank page reserved for our Editor's Note, and we just stare, wondering if we have anything of value to say today. But, of course, even when we have to struggle, we still have to say something. The "something" we're talking about today is punishment — what it means, what it accomplishes, what it reveals about those who are punished and about those who punish.

Everybody who works at The Beat got here along entirely different routes. Our founder, David Inocencio, was a social worker at San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. Some just drifted into the job, ending up here just by chance, as many of us end up in the work we do. And quite a few came through the system. Introduced to The Beat in juvenile hall workshops, they decided to continue the relationship on the outs.

This came originally from Michael Kroll who came to The Beat through his writing about criminal justice issues.. Since you are all writers yourselves, you know that sometimes you just have to write because you have something to say. That's how this ed note was written. Michael was looking at the Sunday comics in the newspaper, and a Dennis The Menace Cartoon made him do more than laugh. It also made him think... about the whole concept of punishment. This is what his thinking produced:

What is the nature of punishment? Believe it or not, I began ruminating on this question — one that is hardly ever asked in this country — while looking at a Dennis The Menace cartoon in yesterday's newspaper. Dennis was in his familiar place in the corner facing the wall, a baseball bat, ball and mitt at his feet. He is saying, "Baseball players are sent to the showers... not the corner!" One can imagine the defiant anger in his voice as he laments his victimhood...

Even at age six, when sent to the corner, Dennis becomes a victim in his own mind. "She did this to me," his child's mind thinks about his mother and temporary jailer. There is no hint of the "crime" that sent him to house arrest, except for the likelihood that it was related to that bat and ball. And, as amused as we are at his observation, we also recognize his sense of being the victim, and we feel his pain.

But, without the critical connection between cause and effect, what purpose does his punishment serve? And how do we define it? How do we distinguish between the immediate reaction to behavior we want to correct — that literal slap on the wrist when a child is found with his or her hand in the cookie jar, or the pain one feels when touching a hot stove — and the more deliberately thought-out consequences that are stretched out over time, often involving formal and time-consuming processes before they can be implemented? Our notions of right and wrong, of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, are conditioned by those instant responses to the choices we make. In those situations, it is impossible to escape personal responsibility. The nexus between what we did and the response is much too close to permit our minds to justify our acts or to lay responsibility on the shoulders of others.

Formal "punishment," on the other hand, is a time-consuming process (whether we're talking hours or years), which allows just such rationalizations to occur, rationalizations which undermine its very purpose — or, at least, the purpose we want to believe it accomplishes. Like Dennis standing in the corner, those we process through our formal system of punishment (for crime) are so far removed from the precipitating cause of the system's response, they are easily able to recast themselves into the role of victims. And, indeed, they are not wrong. Now, stripped of power to do anything but respond to officials, they are subjected to the indignities that those with newly acquired power over their lives routinely subject them to.

I spend hours every week conducting writing workshops in county juvenile halls where teenagers are routinely sent to "punish" them for selling drugs, for engaging in gang activities, and for carrying and using guns. And yet, though they know they are there to be "punished," when told what to do by staff every minute of the day (and often subjected to the arbitrary misuse of this corrupting power), these young "criminals" write almost exclusively about how they are victims of the system, about how they are "being played" — by the cops, by the courts, by the counselors, by "the system." It's a very rare individual who actually ponders the relationship between the specific acts leading to these long-term consequences and the degrading powerless position they now occupy. Even the ubiquitous "Do-the-crime, do-the-time" response is nothing more than a cliché that prompts no real sense of personal responsibility, the sine qua non of successful punishment, where success is defined as moderating future behavior.

Perhaps it is this disconnect that leads to such astonishing rates of re-offending when it comes to California's juvenile detainees. According to the California Division of Juvenile Justice, "70% of state-committed youth are re-arrested within two years of release." (<http://www.cjcg.org/pdf/CJJRPBrochure.pdf>) The actual rate of recidivism must be even higher, since so many perpetrators escape detection and, therefore, punishment.

No private company — indeed, no other government agency — could long survive with such rates of failure. Yet, we continue this failed structure of crime and punishment year after year after

year. Which leads back to the original question inspired by that Dennis The Menace cartoon: What is the nature of punishment? If the system does not work to end or seriously curtail the behavior we claim we are trying to affect, then why do we keep doing it?

The answer might have more to do with us, the punishers, than with the punished. Perhaps we derive some unacknowledged — even unconscious — satisfaction in the suffering of others. Or, perhaps it's not their suffering we desire as much as the sense of control we gain from exerting official power over others. Maybe the motivation is even deeper, even more sinister, lodged in our reptilian brains, human traits we would rather not explore because they reveal more about us than we want to know.

These are questions without answers, reflections on a topic that we seldom ponder. If we're serious about creating a safer society, it's way past time for such serious reflection.

Michael's reflections on punishment were published on the worldwide web, which generated a response from Buddhist priest, Kobutsu Malone. We're including just two paragraphs from his 800-word essay that takes the discussion to the next level. Reverend Kobutsu wrote:

"The net result of any kind of punishment is repressed anger or internalized oppression, humiliation and degradation for both the giver and the receiver of the punishment. It is difficult indeed to really see the profound depth of this truth because we as individuals and collectively as a society live within an oppressive and coercive environment. Our vision is completely blocked to the truth by materialism in the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of our lives. Arrogance and aggression permeate our society, our history, our religious traditions, our so-called "judicial system" to the point that we can not see clearly enough to question the premise of punishment on a fundamental level. We live in a nation surrounded by violence, violence and the infliction of pain is almost worshiped in our entertainment, our "news" reporting and in our day-to-day interrelationships with each other. We fail to perceive that this is a legacy of hatred and oppression that we have inherited from our parents and they from theirs. We forget that our country was founded on the violent conquest and enslavement of indigenous peoples. Our "history" is presented in schools as "patriotic mythology" that hides the reality that our nation perpetrated the institution of racial slavery of African people for generations for the economic gain for people of privilege and wealth. We fail to perceive how our religious traditions have been used to justify the perpetration of genocide and slaughter on indigenous people in the name of "civilization."

"I submit that punishment is uncivilized and serves no purpose other than the perpetuation of oppression. — I was punished, therefore it is justifiable for me to punish another. I was spanked as a child — it did me no harm — therefore I can spank my children. However, deep introspection into our own experience reveals the painful and horrible truth. It is through the means of introspection and insight that we can begin to perceive our addiction to the assumption that punishment is an acceptable mode of behavior."

Most of us never really challenge the very concept of punishment itself, and that might also apply to you writer/readers of The Beat. But it's a subject we would love to know your thoughts about, since punishment is a central reality of your lives. Give it some thought, and then give us the written benefits of those thoughts...

Which leads us to this week's Beat topics... "Power Without Violence" —

Is violence a necessary ingredient of power? Can you be powerful without violence? Are there people you know who, just by how they speak or carry themselves, other people listen to? Do you have personal power that does not rely on weapons or fists or threats of violence? Where does that power come from? How would you describe it? How do you use it? Can you relate an example where you, or someone you know, was able to exert power that did not involve violence? Do you believe the old saying that "the pen is mightier than the sword?"

Our second topic, "Losing Patience" — What have you run out of patience about? We read every week about how tired you are of coming here, but not tired enough to stay out of here. So what will it take for you to lose patience with yourself for coming here? What would it look like if you lost patience with yourself or with someone else? What or who did you used to have patience with in the past, but you finally lost it? How do you express yourself when you're out of patience? Are there people in your life who have lost patience with you? Why?

The last topic, "Super Hero, Super Heroine" — We've all grown up on movies and comic books filled with Super Heroes and Heroines. Often, we imagine what life would be like if we had super powers like them. So, tell us who your favorite Super Hero or Heroine is (or was), and why you chose him or her. What special super powers do they possess that you wish you had. And what would you do if you had those powers?

Thank you ed. note readers, this one goes out to the very gifted baseball player, Ken Griffey Jr. for hitting 600 bombs! Only six players have ever hit more than 600 homers, can you name them, you have Griffey, so tell us who the other five are in this elite club! See you next week!

**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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### Running Out Of Patience

I always run out of patience in juvenile hall. These girls are so irritating. And I really did not choose to come here. No one expected me to come here. It would look pretty bad if I lost patience on someone because in juvenile hall the smallest things get irritating.

I used to always be quiet and calm, but now I don't have patience for anything. If someone or something is taking too long to do something or come, I get really irritated and lose my patience. When I lose my patience I get really angry and I feel like I want to throw something.

A lot of people had lost patience with me, and it has been for stupid things. But I have been forgiven for everything. People love me. I am a lovable person, but don't irritate me because then I will lose my patience and turn into not a likable person.

Smooches!

**-Knhwj, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for writing such a complete description of your relationships with patience. Why do you think you've grown less patient over time? Are you trying to go back to being the patient person you used to be, or are you happy with how you are now?

### Supa Skills

Growin' up, I always idolized Superman (lol) because he could do everything al the other super heroes could do. He was truly super. Another thing I liked about him was he only used his super powers for good.

Even now, as I'm older, I wish I had his powers. Especially the power to teleport. If I could, I would be teleportin' back and forth between each of my family members, spending time with all of 'em.

But one thing Superman didn't have was the power to cure. If I could do that, I would teleport back and forth from 'hood to 'hood and start by curing crack heads and drug users of their addictions. My next move would be to cure the world of ignorance.

The rest I would leave up to God because I don't wanna mess with His work. And I know for a fact, super hero or not, He is the highest power and will guide the rest.

**-Fresh, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** This is a wonderful piece of writing! Not only do you take our topic seriously, but you choose to do some truly wonderful things with your imagined super power while ultimately recognizing that, in the end, you're just human, like all of us. Thank you for giving the subject thought and writing something worth reading!

### Time

What's crackin' with The Beat? This yo' boy Sobolo holdin' it down fo' the block. Today I wanna tell you a little somethin' about time.

When you're in the halls, time is neva a problem. You got all the time in the world. I've seen a lot of people come through those doors and get all mad, talkin' about, "I'm tired of bein' here." You ain't tired! If you were tired of bein' here, you would've thought twice about what you're doin' before you did the crime. And if you don't want to do the time, then don't do the crime.

I mean, moms tryin' to help save your life by tellin' you don't go out; don't rob anybody; don't do anything stupid. And yo' ass still don't listen. So, you either got back in here or you'll be dead on the street, and moms don't even know where you at.

So I'ma tell y'all this once if you' ass don't wanna do the time, then don't do the crime.

**-Sobolo, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** This advice leaves us with just one question: why didn't you follow it? It seems so simple — don't do the crime if you don't want to pay the consequences. But even knowing that, here you are! What happened?

### My Mothers Day

What is Mothers' Day? A day to give your mother thanks for all she has done for you. But for me mothers day is just a day to realize what I don't have. Which is a mother.

I don't understand how a mother can leave her kids. How can a mother lose her love for her own children.

My mother left me out of nowhere when I was 12. Why I couldn't tell you. Left without saying bye - no reason, no phone call, no note, no nothing.

I'll always wonder why it happened. But she was in and out of my life since day one. I know I say I don't care and act like it doesn't hurt, but truth is, it does. I think this has affected my life in some ways - not having this person in my life. But I try not to let it get to me so much. I tell myself how can you love some body you never really knew, right?

What really hurts me inside is the fact she has two of my younger siblings. I just pray to find they aren't going through what me and my older brother went through - the words, the beatings. I hope my mother feels the pain I have felt, wishing she was here. I hope she knows what she lost.

So Mothers' Day will just be like any other day for me in this piece. I just hope she knows if she decides to come back, this time I wont be there for her. I'm ghost Beat.

**-Geneueive, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You have good reason for your sadness. We don't know your mom or what she's been through. But we're betting that her live hasn't been so smooth, or trouble free. Your job is to take good care of yourself. You deserve better, but you have to start by being better to yourself. As time passes, your personal history will be easier to understand, and in understanding, there may come a measure of peace. You've seen how not to 'do it'. Learn from the mistakes of those about you, including your mother's mistakes, and your own. Try your hardest not to repeat the errors you know about. You'll make mistakes. We all do, all our lives. But try to make 'new' mistakes. The old ones don't deserve repeating.

### What Do You Do?

My eyes are filled with fear

You see, there is this boy I hold so dear

In my heart, I know what I must do

And it seems to be making me blue

I love him with all my heart

But we're better off without

I'm done being used by him

I'm done being emotionally abused by him

But I'm so scared of losing him

What do you do when the only one who can take away your tears is the one who made you cry?

Sometimes he made me feel like I just wanted to die

I couldn't sleep without him, so I stayed high

I smoked crank all day, and stayed out all night

I know now that wasn't right

Nobody I want to be with should make me feel that way

But when I talked to him today, he told me he wanted to get back with me

And for the first time in months

I didn't want him anymore

I guess because, I gained the control

I was the leading lady, number one role

No longer second to the other girl, he was mine first anyway

At first I wanted to play his game too, but then I remembered, I'm better than you!

**-Stormi, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for sharing this poem about the pain and complications that come along with love and relationships. No one should have to deal with abuse in a relationship. So glad to hear you sticking up for yourself!



### All Guys Are Not The Same

Well today I want to write about how girls say all guys are the same and it's not true 'cause I'm not. I was in a relationship for well over ten months. I loved every moment wit this girl I loved her so much and still I continue to love her wit all my heart.

Well I remember how she came over one night all I did was kissed her and that was it and then two days later on May seventh, she came over again and that's when we first made love. I was so happy to find some one like her she was my everything.

The first few months we were together I was on house arrest. It was cool, but it was not what I wanted.

Well, back to the first month. I found out we were going to have a baby. We became so close together she slept at my house almost everyday it was great.

Then all of a sudden something happened and I went on the run for two weeks. We got caught up in a g-ride and went in the hall for my first time for about three months. During that time she was writing me everyday. I felt so much love from her every letter made me happy.

One night I felt something weird and then time went by and again I felt some thing weird. But I let it go whatever it was.

When I got out on Dec. 20 2007 I was out, for about two months I found out so much about this girl I thought I knew. she cheated on me wit' my homie but she also got raped. But she also had another boyfriend. She thought I wouldn't find out but I did.

So then I got locked up again for two months. This time we weren't together, but when I get out she tried so hard to get back wit' me as much as I didn't want her back, I just couldn't say no. She means so much to me.

So then I took her back knowing how much she hurt me already. We even found out she was gonna have a baby and not from me it was some other guy's baby. Well I took her back and I thought every thing was perfect again but then three weeks later she left me again for her baby's daddy. It hurt me so much to hear her say those words.

Well there is so much to say but my main point it that she told me she wanted someone different. I was that someone. But what she needed was to be real to me and she wasn't I never cheated on her once. I even lost my virginity to her.

**-Raymond, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: You're right not all guys are the same. We're sorry to hear that the girl played you, but not all girls are the same either. You just made a mistake and fell for the wrong one. You were inexperienced, or maybe it was a first love kind of thing. Remember, all wounds heal in time. But you're a good dude with a positive attitude. Stay like that and positive things will come. Thanks for this heartfelt piece too!*

### It's What I Was Taught

I was always taught from when I was little kickin' it at the park, to kickin' it with my homies that violence is power. Beating up the next person gives you power inside is what they taught me. From fighting to letting the strap breathe is the way to solve any problems on these streets.

I never seen that as not the way to go, I just seen it as life. Even though it's not the right thing, it's what will get the job done and get your stripes on these streets. It's what my ninjas taught me.

**-Young Chue, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We can certainly appreciate that this is how you were taught. But have you ever questioned that "education." After all, children are taught all kinds of things that, once they reach the ability to think for themselves, they discard as wrong. (Think of all the racism that parents teach to their children. They learn it, but it's still wrong.) What good are the stripes you earn if you're wearing them behind bars or six feet under?*

### Loss Of Patience

What's up with The Beat? Me, man, same ol' same ol'. Today, I wanna write about just everyday life in juvenile hall detention center.

Every day, the staff are disrespecting the kids on the unit. Mostly every detainee say, "Forget the staff. They playing me."

But what we fail to realize is that we playing ourselves by coming in here all the time. And you know who talk the most about they don't like being in here but they are seeming to appear in here the most.

I am fed up with coming back and forth here. I've been in here for over twelve months, and I'm really ready to get back to my family and my kid. I want to get my life on track and live life the right way because I know my mom would want me to get my education and be the father I should be.

I do appreciate a couple of these staff that help my time go by a little smoother while I'm in here! I'ma be home in a minute. This a minor setback for this major get back, ya dig...

I love my mother. She's been here by my side the whole time. She always heal my pain when I'm feeling down.

Have you lost patience with anything around you, or even yourself? I've lost patience with all the ignorance all around me. Myself is really tired of being around these young-minded males who claim they are men, but they can't even barely wipe their behinds right.

**-Young Mari, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We're not sure what inspired you to write such a thorough and excellent piece, but we've been waiting for you to step up to the plate like this for a long time! Even though you've blended several topics into one, it still is a fine piece of writing! We won't comment on your assessment of the "young-minded males" that you're incarcerated with (we'd rather you focused on your own situation), but if you're truly fed up with being here (with all those kids), then it's up to you to live up to the expectations you and your mother have for you and your future.*

### Losing Patience

The topic today is about losing patience. A lot of people have lost patience with me. My teacher for example. Especially my POs. I think my family ran out of patience with me 'cause of my gangbanging and all. But it's nothing to be proud of.

Now I'm trying to be the best man I can be and follow the right path, 'cause God love us all. But it's hard not to lose patience with some stupid people that be pushing my buttons.

I'm from San Jose, so I grew up knowing not to be a punk. But I've been getting a lot better at controlling myself when idiots don't know how to act. It's something I have to deal with for now 'cause I'm locked up.

Now, I'm a first-time writer in The Beat Within so I hope to see my writing in the next magazine. Oh yeah, and what up to all the homeboys and homegirls that write in this book. I really enjoy reading The Beat Without, 'cause the older writers are better at expressing their feelings. No offense minors, but I try to be patient with your writings, too.

**-Smirk, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: It's nice to start right off with a piece of the week. It's good to know that you're trying to change the way you've been living. If God loves us all, it includes "enemies" as well as friends, so we're glad to see you recognize that. As for the "idiots" you have to deal with here, it's good practice for the world, which is full of idiots! We don't think prisoners write better than those in the hall, but they have a lot more time...*

### My Grandmother

This is my grandmother...

My first love.

The woman who I would give and do everything for

The only woman in my life that I'll always adore

The one who wakes me up every Saturday to do my morning chores?

This is my grandmother...

The one who pours her love inside my soul

She always hot, never lukewarm, and never cold

She's the type of grandma you could never be mad at and always cuddle and hold

She can say those simple words "I love you" and it's a guarantee you will be made whole

Everybody's grandmother is different and has a different story to be told

But this is my grandmother...

Who loves and cherishes me, especially when I was just a kid

You always kept me happy, and there was no limits to the things you did

And even though I hid certain things from you I'll always love you grandmother with all my heart

Our love for each other is so strong that nothing can tear us apart

I'll always love you in every single way

Don't cry for me grandmother everything is going to be okay

You can smile for me later 'cause I can assure you better days

I got locked up in February and now it's May

But my love for you will never change

Because you're my grandmother

**-Espo, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Of course you don't need us to tell you what it is that you could do to make your grandmother happy - the greatest gift you could give her, right?*

### A Failure

I'm a kid, a kid that is nothing but a failure. I don't like to fail when I tell people I'ma do what I'ma do, but I disappoint the people by not controlling my behavior.

I hate it when I promise them that I'ma be good and I'm not gone start no trouble. But next thing you know I get in trouble and I hate to see their disappointment on their faces.

I hate to fail. I never thought that I would fail to do something 'cause I'm a competitor and I like to win. But I lose when it comes to the behavior competition.

I'm nothing but a loser in this world and I hate being a loser. I hate the look on people's faces when I fail them.

They say, "Canon, are you gone do good?"

I say, "Yes, I promise."

They say, "Are you a man of your word?"

I say "Yes."

But I failed. Now I'm nothing but a man with no word.

They say, "It's ok. At least you're trying." I nod my head, but deep down, I'm not trying.

**-Chris, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This piece took a lot of personal courage to write, Chris, and we admire you for that. It proves to us that you are not a loser. It's very obvious that you are the one you're disappointing the most. Examine yourself and the reasons you are not able to keep the promises you make about controlling your behavior. As you've already know, when you lose control, you are the one who pays the biggest price (including the cost to your self-respect). If you're not really trying, then it's time to do so. Otherwise, you'll just keep disappointing yourself.*

### What More Can I Say

This is a life of a young man

Been thuggin' and pistol bustin' since the age of ten

From li'l deuce deuce to my favorite that four pound

Been ridin' back seat every time it goes down

But then thangs go worse, my family lying in a hearse

As I see thangs different I'm tryin' to bury that curse

Of the gun tossin' people dying and people crying

I try to live my life right but still see people flyin'

One day my mama cried and I told her I wouldn't hurt her

The next day I'm sittin' in the courtroom fighting

attempted murder

As I get the guilty charge I sit and count my days

This is all a dream, hey what more can I say.

**-Magnificent, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Nice piece! We are impressed by the flow, the rhythms and beats here, as well as the powerful, vivid images you use to tell this story. What inspired this piece? Is it based on your own life, someone you know, a dream you had? We know it's a metaphor, but who is "a man named Sin"? What caused him to become the way he is? Sadly, this is close to the story of too many young people these days—the violence and loss of family and community, the almost inevitable feeling of lives gone out of control. What's great about your writing, once again, is that you take the reins and make art out of pain, and that makes us hopeful that you can step up and make some good choices in the rest of your life too.*

### My Prayer

I pray that I will change

'cause I ain't ready to die

I want you to help me to stop thinking

It's ok to slang weed and get high...

Help me God to get by everyday

And to stop telling these same old lies

And even though I'm in jail

I'm trying harder everyday to stay by your side...

I'm trying my best God

but this path I'm on is pretty tough

I'm having trouble letting my past go

'Cause my childhood was hella rough.

And I didn't think that my anger was that big of a deal

Not trippin' that it would take years for my heart to heal

I was a young teen and I had so much anger

that I was ready to kill Ninjas

can't tell me nothing that's just the way I feel

**-Espo, Alameda**

*From The Beat: To get what you pray for you have to learn how to give/Does the Bible teach you how to forgive/Turn the other cheek/ That don't make you weak/If you have the gift of a poet's voice, use it to speak.*

### Hate

If hate's in your imagination, then imagine

That it's spreading

Across the nation

Discrimination against religion

Color

Race

Take a minute to get to know what's behind

The face

Don't believe what the hype is telling you

Find out for yourself and know the truth

Get to know them from the inside

Not the out

So that you can know what they're all about

When you hate others you're bound to hate

Yourself

So instead of kicking down

Offer help

**-Katie, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Well said Katie. We trust you'll take your own advice. And here's our advice: keep writing. You're good at it.*

### The Silent Voice of Patience

Patience...

Patience is what everybody needs,  
But nobody is perfect.

Patience, a voice that is silent.

Patience is never heard but is seen.

Patience, its seen by those who have the time and care  
to see it.

Patience, it's the ability to be calm and take everything  
in, one at a time.

Patience is not violent, nor is it angry,

It is a non-violent form of communication.

Patience, no matter how you see not to have it,

It is constant and always there.

Patience, just take a breath and search for it.

- Stephen, Land Of Enchantment

**From The Beat:** This is a great poem that catches the meaning of how patience should be perceived. We hope you take your own advice and "take a breath and search for it" - it will give you peace of mind. We look forward to more of your writing!

### The Temptation

Temptation is weird feeling, yet it is so strong it can lead to good things or lead you to a very bad result. I say I'm going to get out and do right ...

I make it through one night, but as I lie in bed and think about going through my past over again, going through the things I once did, I feel something. It's like something is knocking on your back door, you pretend not to hear it but as the days pass, the knock seems to get louder and louder.

Temptation to do the things I once did beats harder and harder, you get so tired of hearing the knock. You think you can just let it slip and take a peek, but like I said ... temptation is that hard bang on your door. It can be so strong that just that little peek can kick your door down on you!

-Nicholas, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** This is a great personification of temptation, and it works across so many things. You could be talking about sex, drugs, the street life, really anything. The real show of good writing is that your message is universal and this piece nails it. Good job.

### Losing Patience

I know many people have lost patience with me, like my family and baby momma. I've lost patience with myself because even though it's only my second time here, I not only have myself to live for and become someone, I also have a beautiful baby girl to care for. I missed her first words and her first steps, not to mention her first birthday, but I never plan on missing another one.

I stress time now, because this time away from my daughter is something I will never be able to get back, and those precious father-daughter moments are what I will cherish over the years as I grow and get older.

I realize the person that I thought I wanted to be with and would give my life for ain't the one I would see or will see right before I die. It will be my daughter, my family and all the good times we shared.

So, to all the fathers in here, do your time and get out. If you don't love yourself enough to stay out and do right, then do it for the little person that will want to do exactly what you do — your baby!

Late.

-Young B, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** We can't think of anything else we can say. You've said it all. Some young men think that producing a baby is the same as being a father. It's nice to read a piece by a young man mature enough to know that being a father is a full-time job that requires you to be there in the life of your child. Words of love are not enough. Now, get out and love yourself and your daughter enough to never come back!

### I Have Run Out Of Patience

Being Perfect

My mom especially I lost

For the way I act and

The things I do

To me it don't matter

She did not raise me

For all those years

She was supposed to

She abandoned me

So I grew up with

My grandma for twelve years

Being physically abused and emotionally

Then I finally came to live with my mom

It was strange

Something new

And we never got along

We never spent time together

We grew apart day by day

And that's when I started

Raising myself

Hanging out, smoking, and just doing me

We started having fights

Though I never forgave her

For what she put me through

Now I am just sitting behind these walls

Thinking about what I will do

Without her in my life

Living in the system

'Till the age of 18

I wanted to come back home

Though its too late

I never want to forgive her

Or talk to her the way I used to

That's one thing I will say

Don't never have kids

If you don't know how

To take care of them

So I just got to

Do me in a positive way

Show the world something

Be successful in my life

Make my grandpa and God proud

They are the only

People helping me

Through this Journey

To be a success story

That no one will ever forget about

You might even write about

Watch about

Or talk about

Though I will still be

Shining

-Karmeisha, Alameda

**From The Beat:** What a powerful poem about your life and struggles. We are glad you have your grandfather sticking by you, and we hope that you will always remember that you are an intelligent woman and a talented writer!

*I missed her first words and her first steps, not to mention her first birthday, but I never plan on missing another one.*



### La Historia De Mi Familia

La historia de mi familia en el año 2005. No recuerdo la fecha entre mi madre y mi padre. Ocurrió un gran problema cuando de pronto un día mi madre decidió salir de nuestro hogar. Se marchó a otro lugar dejándonos solos a mi padre y hermanos.

Cuando ella nos dejó, mi hermano menor era muy pequeño y el otro era un poco menor que yo. Yo tenía 15 años.

Recuerdo que mi padre cayó en una crisis de depresión. Empecé a tomar licor sin importarle a nosotros. A mí me daba tristeza ver como mi padre se destruía en las cantinas hasta llegar a punto de querer suicidarse. Me daba mucho coraje y miedo que mi padre llegara a ser eso por culpa de mi madre. Pensaba en que iba a ser de nosotros sin madre y padre.

Después decidí venirme para los Estados Unidos para poder ayudar a mis hermanos y a mi padre.

Gracias a Dios mi padre se puso en tratamiento y pudo dejar de tomar licor.

Ahora que no tengo mi madre quisiera darles las gracias a mi madre por haberme traído a este mundo. Quiero también felicitar a mi padre por haber salido adelante. Darles gracias a Dios por tener con vida a mi padre, y hermanos.

A mi madre, donde sea que esté, Feliz Día de las Madres.

**From The Beat:** Que bien que apesar de todo, no le guardes rencor a tu madre despues de lo que hizo o no hizo. También nos alegra mucho que tu padre haya salido de esa depresión y que ahora este curado. Ahora, el problema no son ellos sino la situación en que te encuentras. Recuerda que venistes aqui por un solo propósito el cual es ayudar a tu padre y a tus hermanos. Es tiempo para que empieces a trabajar en tus propósitos antes que sea tarde. Nos gusto mucho haber leído algo de tu vida aunque no haya sido algo alegre. Siguenos escribiendo que para eso estamos, para escucharte.

### The Story Of My Family

The story of my family was in 2005. I can't exactly remember the date in which my parents separated. A big problem occurred when my mother decided to leave the house. She left to another place leaving us - my dad, and my brothers alone.

I remember when she left us, my younger brother was very young, and other one was a little bit younger than I am. I am 15 years old.

I remember my dad ended up in a depression crisis. He started to drink alcohol without caring about us. I would be very sad to see how he was destroying his life in bars until getting to point of thinking of committing suicide. It would get me mad and afraid that my dad would end up doing that due to my mother. I would think about what life would be about, without a mother and father.

Later, I decided to come here to the US to help my brothers and father.

Thank God my dad took a treatment and stop drinking liquor.

Now that I don't have my mother, I wish to thank her for bringing me to this world.

I also want to congratulate my dad for finding a way out. Thank God for having my dad and brothers alive.

To my mother, wherever she is: Happy Mother's Day.

**-Bairon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** In spite of what she did or didn't do, it's surprising that you don't hold grudges towards your mother. We are also happy that your father made it from his depression. Now the problem seems to be you. Remember that you came here for a purpose that is to help your father and brothers. It's time for you to start working on your purposes, before it's too late. You got people who depend on you. We liked your story so much even though it was a sad one. Keep writing to us, we are here to listen to you.

### Madre, Escúchame

Nacido en tierra fina de las calle de San Jose, donde en cada esquina hay pura policia. Día y día sufren muchos nuestras familias, pensando que sus hijos van a caer algún día.

Mi familia es nacida en Michoacan, Mexico. ¿Sabes que? Nos vale madre. A mi madrecita le digo como dicen los originales, "no le heches la culpa al tiempo ni a las piedras del camino, ni te heches la culpa tu por darle al mundo un mal hijo. Son las amistades, madre, las que acabaron conmigo.

Unas cuantas paredes de piedra y una ventana de asero estan formando mi mundo y acompañando mi encierro. ¿Dónde estan todos aquellos amigos de mi dinero? No sé cuanto años me hechen, ni los que voy a aguantarles, pero no te apures madre esto tenía que pasarme. Esto que serva de ejemplo de ahora en adelante.

Me encuentro en estas calles donde las drogas son bien pesadas. Son pura coca y hierba mala. Mis carnales del barrio no te tienen miedo a nada. Para nosotros, no existen leyes ni gente. Se me enloquece que el mismo Diablo le teme.

Nomás le pido a Dios que a mi gente, me la cuide porque en esta vida que vivimos otro día no es prometido.

**From The Beat:** Por lo menos te has dado cuenta de la culpa por la cual tu vida se ha desviado a tal extremo. Esa misma pregunta te preguntamos a ti: ¿Dónde estan esos que decian ser tu amigos? Aqui, es cuando uno se da cuenta de la realidad. Cualquiera que sea tu sentencia, lo que deberias de hacer es buscar la manera como usar este tiempo para mejorar tu modo de ser y buscar una salida a esta vida que te probablemente te llebe a otro lugar donde no haya luz ni esperanza de salir nunca más. La vida no es juego y esperamos que no te tomes mucho tiempo para darte cuenta de eso. O Hasta nunca!

### Mother, Listen To Me

Born in the refined land of the streets of San Jose, where police are in every corner. Day by day, our families suffer so much, thinking that their children will fall one day.

My family was born in Michoacan, Mexico. But you know what? We don't care.

I say this to my mother like originals say, "don't blame time, the stones from the road, neither blame yourself for giving a bad son to the world." Mother, bad friendships are the ones who finished me.

A few walls made of stones and a steel window is forming my world and is my only companion in my lock up. Where are those friends with money? I don't know how many years I'll get, neither don't know how many years I'll be able to handle, but don't worry mother I had this coming. I'll take this to help me as a lesson.

I found myself on the streets where drugs are very heavy. There is a lot of coke and bad herbs. For us, there are no laws for people. It's crazy that even the devil is afraid of us.

I just ask God to take care of my people because in this world where we live, another day is not promised.

**-Lil' Knuckles, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** At least, you have realized what has misguided your life to the point where you are. We are going to ask you the same question: where are those who are supposed to be your friends? This is when you get a taste of what reality really is. Whatever your sentence is, we hope you use this time to better your behavior and to find a way out from this life that will probable take you to another place where there will be no light neither hopes to come back. Life is not a joke, and we hope it doesn't take you too long to realize this. Or forever!

*I also want to congratulate my dad for finding a way out.*



### La Vida En La Cárcel

Mi nombre es Oscar. Soy de Nicaragua y el día de hoy, les voy a contar como ha sido mi vida en la cárcel. Cuando estaba afuera mi vida era normal. Yo decía que la cárcel era lo mejor, que ahí estaban los mejores y lo malos. Yo quería pertenecer a eso, ponerme tatuajes y todas esas cosas.

Cuando vine por mi primera vez, dije que al fin se me había cumplido mi sueño. Con el tiempo, comienzas te desesperar. La comida te aburre, y las reglas que hay son pesadas. Por lo menos para mí aquí en esta unidad, nunca me ha gustado levantarme temprano y ahora lo estoy haciendo.

Lo que les quiero decir es que ahora me hace falta todo. Aparte de mi libertad hasta la familia. Lo mejor que me ha pasado es que en la cárcel conocí de Dios y del amor que nos tiene. Por eso yo te digo, que tengas fe y no pierdas las esperanzas y verá que todo mejorará.

**From The Beat:** Claro que tu vida ha cambiado. Aquí no tienes el privilegio que tenías allá afuera. Aquí tienes que seguir reglas te guste o no te guste. ¿Si tanto te quejas de lo que no te gusta en este lugar, por qué has venido aquí otra vez y otra vez? Eso es lo que justamente no entendemos. ¿Qué es lo que los hace venir aquí? ¿Nos puedes ayudar a entender?

### Life In Jail

My name is Oscar. I am from Nicaragua and today I'm going to share how has my life been in jail. When I was out, my life was normal. I would think that jail was off the hook, and there were only the best and bad ones. I wanted to be part of it, get tattoos, and other things.

When I got here for the first time, I thought that I finally made my dream come true. Throughout time, you start to get desperate. You get bored of the food, and the rules are hard to follow. At least for me, in this unit, it has always been hard to get up early and now I am doing it.

What I want to say is that I miss everything. Besides my freedom, I also miss my family. The best thing I've gotten in jail is that I learned from God, and the love He has for us. That's why I say to have faith and don't lose hope and you will see that everything will get better.

**-Oscar, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Of course, your life has changed. In here, you don't have the privileges you had outside. In here, you have to follow the rules whether you like it or not. If you complain so much about this place, why you keep coming back in here again and again? This is what exactly we can't understand. What makes you come here? Can you help us understand?

### My Pop's Words

What's up Beat, well my name is Marcos, and I am from Oakland. Well I'm just going to write about an event that opened my eyes.

Well I remember that my dad and my mom told me, "Don't get in a gang, don't wear baggy clothes, don't get tattoos," and I was like, why? I started kicking it with my homies, and I jumped in.

My dad told me that a gang was just going to bring problems, but I didn't listen. I remember he used to sit me down and tell me, "One day I'm going to end up going to jail because of you," and I was being hard headed and thinking, "I'm doing the crime, not him, so why is he going to go to jail?"

Now I'm in the Hall, the judge don't got a strong case so he gave 5-0 a search warrant, they asked my pops for his papers but since my pops is a 100% Michoacano, they took him to Santa Rita, and they are trying to deport him. Now I'm in a maximum-security unit thinking about my pop's words, and regretting what I did.

If I wasn't here, none of this would have ever happened.

**-Marcos, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You're going to have to be very strong to get through this. We're glad your father is getting legal help and that your mother has finally been able to talk to him - but in the meantime, you have some time to think about his advice. For example, during your time locked up, are you thinking about how to disaffiliate, how to get away from the lifestyle? You owe it to your family, you owe it to yourself! Peace.

### Una Canción Para Todos Los Hondureños

Estas preso de nuevo, crees que es un juego, pero tu madre sufre y llora.

Alla adentro sentado piensas en como escapar porque en un juicio dió su libertad. Adentro está un tal mentado Juan del barrio.

Yo les canto, "hey brother, dime tú si crees que es justo hacer sufrir a la madre que te trajo a este mundo por un dinero prestado que hoy te lo cobra el gobierno?"

Cuando estas encerrado, y tu madre te ve, se le viene un dolor en su alma. Ella trata de soportarlo para que tu no la veas llorar. Al llegar a su casa, tú la tienes que escuchar como grita, se tira al piso a desahogarse el dolor. Y llora mucho.

Le pido a Jesus Cristo que le de fuerzas y valor que necesito. Friend, ahora escucha el consejo que te quiero brindar. He venido creciendo en un barrio mortal donde no trabajaba. Yo me puse a pensar que vendiendo droga sería mi final.

**From The Beat:** Es verdad a las madres les duele mucho verlos en este lugar. ¿Has hablado por experiencia o lo has visto lo que dices? Creemos que muchos de ustedes son injustos con la personas que más deben de estimar. Deberían de darle otro tipo de apreciación a sus madres quienes son las personas que más lo quieren a ustedes. Ya has visto a donde la droga te lleva, esperamos que aprendas a lo que lleva hacer las cosas malas.

### A Song To All Hondurans

You're locked up again, you think this is a game, but your mother suffers and cries.

There, sitting there, you think how to escape because in a jury, you left your freedom. Inside, there is a supposed-called Juan from the 'hood.

I sing, "hey brother, tell me, you think it's fair to make our mothers suffer, she who brought you to this world, for loaned money that now the government is asking for?"

When you are locked up and your mother come to see you, a pain comes to her soul. She tried to hold it, so you won't see her cry. When she gets home, you have to listen how she screams, and she throw herself to the floor to release her pain. She cries so much.

I ask Jesus Christ to give me the strength and courage I need. Friend, now listen to the advice I want to give you. I've grown in a mortal 'hood I didn't work. I thought selling drugs was going to be my end.

**-Elias, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It's true that it hurts mothers so much to have you in here. Are you talking from experience or have you seen this? We think that a lot of you guys are unfair with the person you should care the most. You should give them another type of appreciation to the person who loves you the most. You've seen where drugs take people to, so it's time to do something about this issue.



## Losing Patience

What's up with The Beat? This that ninja Mike writing out of the big dog unit. I'ma write up on this topic.

Man, I'm losing patience with this juvenile shhh. I been coming in and out of here since I was 15. I am now 18. I spent almost my whole teenage years behind these walls.

I missed a lot of my family's birthdays. It's time for a change and that change is now.

**-Mike, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** What we understand from this is that you are losing your patience with yourself. You're so right, it's time for that change you've known for a long time that you had to make. You've got too much going for you to throw it away for a life of crime and punishment. Don't wait to do what you know you must!

## Missing My Daughter

Last night I got a letter. It was some pictures of my daughter. I been here a month and a half waiting for that letter, so I feel better now. But then again, I feel guilty 'cause my daughter is eight months and I won't get out until she's two or a little older. So, I guess my high of the week was that I got a letter and my low is how I hate thinking about that I won't be there to see her first steps or words.

**- A young sad dad, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** It's hard to know that your daughter is growing up without knowing you, but instead of getting down about it, send her letters that her mother can read to her. Be involved in her life in anyway you can and promise yourself that when you get out, you'll make up for lost time.

## Losing Patience

I ran out of patience when I had picked a fight with this one boy. I had went to court and I was supposed to get out, but the judge told me I wasn't. When I got back to the unit, I just picked a fight with him.

But when I'm here and I lose my patience, it's going to the judge, and you're not going to be getting out when you think you are. If I was to lose patience with someone else, someone's going to get hurt, me or him.

Last time I went to school was the last time I lost my patience. I really don't express myself when I'm angry, I just let it build up. My mom have lost patience with me before, but she opened up.

**-Gregory, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** What has your mom lost patience with you about? Have you also lost patience with yourself? Have you learned any good strategies for not losing your temper when you feel like it? If you see a good friend about to lose his temper (and suffer the consequences), what do you say to get him to calm down?

## Power Without Violence

Most of the time, violence is used in everyday life for people to get what they want. Most of the time, it's the key to get what you want. The only way to be powerful without violence is to talk to whoever you got a problem with.

Depending on the problem, you can use talking to get out of certain situations. For some people, violence is the only way to handle situations. Like they really have no other choice but to be violent.

**-Richard, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We know what you mean when you write that some people "have no other choice but to be violent," but we wonder if those people might have avoided being in that situation to begin with. During the Civil Rights Movement in the South, teenagers (led by Martin Luther King) allowed themselves to get beat without fighting back. Can you imagine yourself in that position? Their non-violence produced many changes in the law, so it had real power.

## This Love

I love you  
I love you not  
I love you for everything you've got  
And what you don't  
To see your face  
To see you smile  
Can I just stay with you for a while  
To hold you close  
To hold you tight  
Promise me you'll stay the night  
Promise me all your heart  
Promise me we'll never part  
Say you love me  
Say you care  
I love you  
To this I swear

Tell me you love me  
Tell me you care  
One more lie and this I swear  
I'll leave you alone forever and more  
'Cause It's no longer you that I adore  
Every lie you told  
and promise you made  
It was all just fake  
A stupid charade

**-Katie, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Wow, this takes a nasty turn at the end. And it sounds familiar. Is this a Katie original, or have you 'borrowed', just a bit? The Beat wants to know.

## Trial Date

Man, what's up with The Beat? It's your boy Grimy. Man, my trial date is on the corner. Man, it's coming so fast. I am waiting to see what they are going to do with me.

If I lose, I go to YA with a strike on my record. And if I win, I go home with the case dropped, not with my probation time extended.

It's hard because I'm doing somebody else time, but I chose the crazy life. But it cool, though. The time is going to go by quick if I do what I have to do, y7ou feel me. But until then I'ma keep it straight up crazy style, yaddaimean.

And for all in the halls, keep it crazy with your heads up, until next time. Late.

**-Grimy, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Like we've said to you before, Grimy, you have to make some clear choices. Even though we don't agree with you that you "chose the crazy life" (we think it was handed to you as a child, and that you had very little power to choose something else), we think that now is the time to be making real choices with real consequences. Be careful of thinking that you don't have to make a choice, and that you can have both your old life and a new one. It just doesn't work that way. If you don't give up your old ways, you will find that they will lead you right back to the next level of incarceration! Word to the wise.

## A Hero To Me

A here to me is a man named Bryan. He was shot a couple years back, and got back to his feet. His superhero power to me is that he showed invincibility. He got shot in the had and stomach and shortly thereafter, he broke his hip. And he still walkin'. Thos is superhero credentials to me!

**-Lil' Skipa, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We agree with you. It is heroic, after such serious injuries, not just to learn to walk and talk again, but to use your experience to reach out to others who are living dangerously to try to make them see some possible consequences they may not have considered.



## Juvenile Hall

You can't see me through these brick walls  
 But you could hear my voice in my collect calls  
 I'm wearing other people's T-shirts, their pants and  
 drawe's  
 The only thing to do in here is to write letters and play  
 handball  
 They call it juvenile hall; I don't know what to call it  
 'Cause I'm in here with drug addicts murderers and  
 alcoholics  
 I look at it as day care  
 'Cause you got POs, judges and counselors being unfair  
 They only give you a little bit of food  
 And you got holes in your shoes  
 I need to use the sit-down, but I got to ask before I do  
 You think you know how it feels  
 But you have no clue

**-King Chino, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Well, now that you have more than just a clue about how it feels to be locked up (you did a good job of describing it), what do you plan to change when you get out of here so you don't have to experience it again? We'd like you to experience being a responsible free person, and then write a poem about that!*

## The White Man Keeps Us Here

Last night I was in the vent talking to the person next to me about how the white person controls a lot.  
 Let's say when someone wants to move, you have to fill the right paperwork in order to proceed. And if you don't, then there will be consequences if the process isn't followed. The white person will decide.  
 Then in here you have to raise your hand to do things. Also the school history textbooks are full of white history. They don't talk about other races only once in a while.  
 And how they waste money on us being in here instead of using it for us to go to college. There are lots of us that have a smart mind and there are athletes here. But I'm tired of this stuff. I'm going to make a change.  
 I'm doing a little thinking about what's going to happen. It's either going to Minnesota or a year in county. I got court tomorrow, and so far, it's looking like I'm going to MN, but the DA might not approve it. So now, I just tot to wait.

**-Wiggims, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We certainly agree with you that racism has kept minorities from achieving all they could achieve. But, at the same time, you have to see that you have a lot of power in your own life, whatever your race. Remember, there is a black man who might well be our next President, a black woman Secretary of State, a black Supreme Court Justice and far too many black athletes, actors, businesspeople, doctors, lawyers and everything else to be able to blame everything on racism. What's in Minnesota? What would you like to happen?*

## Change

My patience towards the system is on empty. Yeah, we tend to mess up time to time, but what do they really do to help us? I'm not gonna lie – some of us deserve our punishments. But what about the ones that really do want to change? They all out-weight all the good we do with the mistakes we make. If they took the time to see that some of us do good out there, but we just get caught in the wrong situation...  
 Well, I guess the only way I can solve this problem is to stay out of the system.

**-Lil' Ant, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: This piece struck us as honest, but also full of excuses until the end. But we see pieces of change and truth in here. Do good, get out and figure out a way to make a serious change in the system for the good of others.*

## Kitsune's Fictional Story, Part One

It was before sunrise when Jekan woke up. He got out of bed and stretched. Today was the day that the youth enlisted into Kitsunian Academy of Tactical Combat (KATC), which taught fighting techniques more advanced than that of the planets most elite military forces. The KATC was recruiting young healthy adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 to train for classified causes.

Excited Jekan had volunteered at the age of 12 hoping to be accepted now after a long 3 ½ years he received a phone call at precisely 9:00 the previous night directing him to arrive at the KATC no later than sunrise.

Alone, Jekan donned his brand new camouflage suit and black combat boots which were supplied by the KATC.

After getting ready the boy stepped out of his warm cozy house and into the chill of the morning air. There was a heavy fog hanging all around him making it hard to see. It was so cold that when he exhaled a warm misty vapor hovered briefly in the air. There was a fresh layer of snow on the ground from last night's storm, which meant the river would was most likely be frozen and would be easy to cross.

Jekan glanced at his watch, which read 5:21am. Sunrise was at 6:02 am he had to run harder and faster than he ever ran before, but making it to the KATC was going to be difficult to accomplish.... To be continued.

**-Kitune, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: Sounds like you started writing a pretty interesting story. You structured it well you just need to keep writing! So keep writing and don't leave us readers hanging!*

## Power

To me, violence is a necessity of life. Words are powerful, but if there are no violence, then for example, the United States would not be what it is today. They used violence, but also they used words, with words leading to violence, pertaining to power. That right there is power, because it showed that you could use peace talks, but if that doesn't work, use your military, meaning violence.

Violence make people fear you. That right there is a form of power.

**-V, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: We agree that violence is a form of power, but the question is, can you imagine power without violence? When a beautiful woman walks in the room, does she need violence to have power over you? Was Martin Luther King powerless because he refused to resort to violence? Of course, you're right that the U.S. wouldn't be what it is today but for violence, and a lot of it. But that only leads us to ask: where is the U.S. today?*

## Patience

God knows how hard it is not to lose your patience. I'm the kind of person that can only take so much, and then after I'm fed up, I blow up.

I took anger management to think that it was going to help, but I guess it only helped to a certain extent. It takes me to turn my back on ignorance for me to really not lose my patience.

But now I've become a better person. People always mistake my kindness for weakness, but it is what it is. Anybody want it, they can get the business. But schedule that night appointment, 'cause messin' over my time is your bad for me losing patience.

**-Jelly, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: How did anger management help you hold your temper? What strategies have you developed that let you walk away from situations where you might have confronted them at an earlier age? What makes you a better person now than before? Do you find yourself getting more or less patient as you get older?*

## Asian Ly

There was once was an Asian guy. It seemed he had a good life to me. He had a pretty lady. I seen her myself. His mom and dad were very supportive. He went to school and was doing good.

I think I knew him personally myself. He was hella cool to joke around with. He's the funniest Asian I ever knew. He was good looking with the haircut I gave him in juvie. But like I said, he had a pretty Asian girl. He was in love you can say.

One messed up decision threw his whole life away. Now he's facing 25 to life. The DA has a good clean case. Stuck on thinking of his lady, he might not see her until he and she are 43.

He leaves to county tomorrow 'cause he turns 18. I hope one day wherever he's at I see him. Damn, that fool gonna be gone and missed.

All that are doing hard time, stay strong in the mind. Well, I'ma cut this right here. Late.

**-Cisco, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** It's obvious that Ly has made as strong an impression on those locked up with him as he has on us. He's facing serious time, but that's not the same as saying he's thrown his life away. Of course, we wish he wasn't going off to prison, too, but we know too many people who have taken that path and done extraordinary things to think of it as the end of the line. There is life during and after prison, and we fully expect Ly to be engaged in it. Thank you for this well-deserved tribute.

## A Generous Super Hero

If I was a super hero I would build more schools and donate money to the school for funds and field trips. I would also build up more homeless shelters for the homeless 'cause it hurt me to my heart to see people on the streets.

I would love to make drugs disappear 'cause that shhh done ruined a lot of my loved ones in a lot of ways. I would be the best hero I could possibly be.

**-Mb, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Well, we're grateful that you let us publish this excellent piece in The Beat! If you did the things you write about here, you would definitely be a super hero. Not even the politicians who are elected to do these things seem able to pull them off.

## Good News, Bad News

Wha's up with The Beat, though? Man, still here still stressing, but you know, it's coo'. Did three weeks. I really don't know how much longer I might be in here, but hopefully when I go back to court on the 19th of May on Monday, I hope the judge will be coo' and give me a last chance.

I've been doing good. But anyways, not long ago I talked to my moms. That definitely made my day because she came and seen me. When we was talking, she told me I might go home depending on the judge if she in a good mood. I mean since they drop my count or go to Walden for a couple months and knock that out and be off probation.

Also, if I get sentenced to Walden, I'm going. But then it all depends if I stay here a little longer. But I ain't tryna stay here for a lil'-ass violation. Most likely I pray to God every day and doing the good things and tell Him when I get out of here I will be a changed man.

Well Beat, I ran out of ideas. I guess I'll see you some time soon on the outs. Ha ha.

**-M&M, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We would love to see you on the outs — especially if you stay away from those "lil'-ass violations" that strip you of your freedom! When you tell God that you plan to be "a changed man," what are the changes you're anticipating making?

## Food Please

I want food. I'm losing my mind.

Chicken wings from Wing Stop,  
chicken noodle soup – clam chowder... Real food is on my mind.

I am so tired of baked food.

I want some Everret and Jones barbequed ribs, chicken links, baked beans, potato salad. Gimmie some starch! Right about now I'd even settle for a pack of Maunchan Top Ramen/ Oodles of Noodles. Sardines, oysters, shrimp, crab, lobster I'm going crazy over food...

My baby's kickin' my stomach.

Gimmie some food, I wanna cry.

I haven't got my Snack Bag since I've been here. They're starving me. Not literally, but please can I have some food. Please!

**-Prego-Diamond Girl, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for sharing all the food you're jonesing for. We're sure Beat readers are getting hungry as they read your piece...Another thing to look forward about getting out of jail eating healthy and being there for your baby!

## The Hard Knock Life

The hard knock life is not just selling drugs

Walking round with guns

The hard knock life is in and out of jail always on the run

The hard knock life

Is being a young teen and getting shot at more than twenty times

The hard knock life is living a life of crime

This for my people on the block selling them dimes

The hard knock life

Is thinking you ain't gone live long

The hard knock life

Is in yo' cell thinking bout going home

The hard knock life

Is livin' like an o.g.

The hard knock life

Is for my people bustin' them forty's

The hard knock life

Is knowing you selling "d" to yo' potna's mama

The hard knock life

Is living with hella drama

The hard knock life

Is living the way I'm hustlin' cooking crack up in the kitchen

The hard knock life

Is seeing yo' ninja die in front of ya'

But you ain't got no banger so you couldn't even try to bust at them

The hard knock life

Is tryna eat on yo' block

Mobbing with the forty holding thrity-two shots

The hard knock life

Is when them ninjas come through tryin' to bust so you poppin' back just to stay a live bra

This for my ninjas in them cells

Throw yo' hands up high if you know how it feels

The hard knock life.

**-Lil' Al, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** The hard knock life is waking up everyday at 6 in the morning to go to work five days a week so you can pay the rent. The hard knock life is when you have to pay the PG&E bill so you can have electricity so you can watch T.V., have the lights working, and cook your food. And the hard knock life is when you need to work two jobs just to pay the bills. Keep in mind JUST TO PAY THE BILLS. No money for no Jordans, Grills, Scraper, or nothing! The Hard knock life is living in a 3rd world country and not having anything to eat! The Hard knock life is trying to live your life while people are dropping bombs everywhere[Iraq]. That's a hard knock life young homie.



## Losing Patience

Wha's up, Beat? This yo' mans again. Patience is a big factor in life. When you are patient, you are willing to sacrifice time by making the best of it without getting stressed out.

I'm going to a group home and I'ma knock it out. I'ma just think to myself that this group home is going to benefit me. I'll be back out, and when I am, the same stuff gonna be there when I left.

But yeah, Beat, advice for y'all out there, don't lose patience. You might get into something you gonna regret.

**-Ni-Nasty, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope the group home you're going to does benefit you. But even if it doesn't, you can always tell yourself that running cannot benefit you!

## Listen

What's up with The Beat? This ya boy F.B. up in here, waitin' to go to this grouper. I got a rap for y'all:

Outside all night hustlin' in the streets  
 Moms up stressed out, don't want to lose me to beef  
 I need some money in my pockets  
 So I get off rocks  
 Bad nerves don't want to get grabbed by cops  
 Stop going to school like it wasn't for me  
 Got taken down for a cannon, sent me to unit three  
 Got yo' bra on the run smokin' weed and poppin'  
 Runnin' from the rollers and you know I ain't stoppin'  
 Sometimes I think that I'm livin' in hell  
 Got caught doin' dumb shhhh, now I'm up in a cell  
 Lookin' at all of the pictures of the people I'm missin'  
 I wish I would've did it now, sat down and listened

**-F.B., San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You say you're running from the rollers and you aren't stopping, but that doesn't exactly express the reality of your situation... It's clear that you didn't run fast enough! And it's even clearer that, sooner or later, they'll always outrun you. So, why not stop running altogether. Stop doing the things you have to run from, and your worries will be behind you.

## Hella Mad At Myself

Man, what's good Beat? Well, yup, I'm back. The next day after just folding a few of 13.17 Beats and typing, I am back. I bet you're shocked because of the piece I wrote in 13.17. I even made piece of the week.

Damn! I'm hella mad. I took ten steps forward and five stops back. I was being real stupid. Now I really regret catchin' a new case because my PO don't know what he wanna do with me. Part of him says Colorado, but part of him wants to put me back at the place I was at. The director of the place wants me back and is holding my bed.

I just hope he sends me back where I was and continue doing the positive things I was doing, like working for The Beat.

Well, I'm out. Please pray for me. Oh, and tell Victor, Perry, Pauline, M. Kroll and all the other staff I'll see y'all when I get out.

**-Joann, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We won't tell you that we aren't disappointed, because we are. You must be even more disappointed at yourself for falling back into old habits that didn't serve you very well in the past, and won't serve you well in the present. But, Joann, we have faith in you. We know what you're capable of doing, which is about anything you set your mind to. So, set your mind to never again doing the things that you KNOW lead to lock-up, and start doing those things that will lead to the life you want and deserve. Your desk at The Beat is waiting for you.

## Power Without Violence

What up with The Beat? This that ninja Mike writing out of the big dawg unit. It's a power that does not involve violence but can get you in a lot of trouble. The power is love.

Love can get you into a lot of shhhh. Love can make you do crazy things. The question is, is it love, or is it lust. Lust can make you do things in the moment of feeling. Love can make it and it can break you. Love is a very powerful drug.

**-Mike, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Have you done foolish things in the name of love? Which do you think has more power over an individual, lust or love? Is it the same for men and for women, or are men more driven by lust and women by love? What would turn this into a piece of the week are examples from your own experience that help to explain the important things you're saying.

## Losing Patience

When a ninja been down for so long, a ninja start losing patience. They be tryna push a ninja court date hella far back, and a ninja be lightweight going crazy in this joint, ready to just go off on anybody. But that's when yo' patience starts to kick in. You just gotta calm down and stand your ground.

Patience is a bastard, boy. You ain't heard. To get what you want, you gotta have patience especially with some of these counselors that don't care and just wanna send kids in they room over some little shhhh. You gotta be patient and don't let that lil' shhhh get to you.

Ey, yo, I'm up outta here. All that's doing time, keep yo' head up and have patience.

**-Hard, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** What do you find to be the hardest thing in your life to be patient about? What's the worst thing that's happened to you because of losing your patience? What's the best thing that's happened to you because you were patient?

## Fake People

People say they're down  
 They say they don't play around  
 That they're ready for the pinta-bound  
 But it's the other way around  
 They ain't down to play  
 All they do is pray  
 But what I do is for pride  
 So tell me who's down to ride  
 I'm a straight up "G"  
 So ask me what I see  
 Fake people try to be like me  
 Trying to earn respect and power  
 But I'm on top of the tower  
 Playing this game  
 In a life with no shame  
 You see my life ain't the same  
 Getting locked up over and over  
 As my heart gets colder and colder  
 I'm getting older  
 But I'm one of a kind  
 This my rhyme  
 'Til the next time, Beat

**-Spooky, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're impressed with your rhyme skills, but not with the message. Even though you write that you're "one of a kind," we've read this same sort of piece many, many times and it always makes us scratch our heads. Here you are — locked up, taking orders from strangers, eating what someone else tells you to eat, wearing some other boy's drawes, enjoying no female company — and you still think you've got power and that you're on top... Like we said, every time we read this, we scratch our heads...

## Ride It Out

It's every man for himself 'cause the streets and ninjas  
 are dirty  
 So many homies done passed so I'm pouring out half my  
 40

Ninjas say they know me, and down fo' me  
 That's not a question homie, more like real talk  
 If you running 'cause it's chasing you, don't be a sucka  
 and walk

5150 insane thoughts through my brain  
 Numb it up like I took a big sniff of powder cocaine  
 I'm searching in the darkness fo' shhh I have to find  
 I got revenge in my mind, turn back the hands of time  
 'cause I can't leave this shhh behind

Real ninjas ain't gotta prove nothing, when they get  
 tested they respond not react  
 Yo' enemies stab you in the back, and yo' own patnas  
 stab you in the back  
 And just like that, smoke and drank are burning my  
 throat

I don't consider myself sick, more like cut throat  
 I inhale purp to help me clear up, I sip on drank to help  
 me cheer up

Ya suckas mean muggin' when ya know ya feared up  
 I'm hearing voices in my dome that won't leave me  
 alone, and ask how much longer

I'ma be on this earth 'cause smily faces make me  
 wonder

My good and bad side are fighting like two pits  
 And I ain't ready to ditch, snitch or go out with a twitch  
 So, until the day I eave, I'ma have my finga on the triggga  
 like a true chola

Trusting no one and ride it sola

**-Giggles, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: All we can do, Giggles, is hope that you begin to see life in a new way before you throw it all away. Are you really hearing voices in your head? If so, that's a sign you should pay attention to, something in you trying to talk to you, hoping you'll listen. (But if they are voices you can't control, or frighten you, you should talk to someone about that, too.) You're worth so much more than just another body in another jail... so much more than any cause that you've been handed. What's a "real" ninja to you? Are the "real" ones locked up and the "fake" ones free? What do you want out of life, Giggles? Is the path you've chosen leading you there?*

## The Deadliest Weapon

To a bystander,  
 Being outside after dark  
 Them predators want yo' blood like a hammerhead shark  
 People that snitch, this real talk

Killers so drugged up want to see their victims on the  
 sidewalk Conscience playing tricks on the mind  
 Murderers kill people and their corpses hard to find  
 Not found underground  
 The wicked never sleeps

At night is when them murderers creep.  
 People can't live in peace it's always violence  
 Some people can't live in silence

The rebels be off of cocaine that's the devil  
 His evildoing to possess and have people exorcism  
 numb

The devil manipulated so many people to go on one  
 Murderers don't realize what was done  
 Until they realized they took somebody's son  
 The deadliest weapon in the world is a gun

**-Justin, Alameda**

*From The Beat: You paint a picture of a hell on earth/Where a person is doomed from the day of his birth/But you're the one with the sharpest eyes/Is there a way to make a truth from all these lies/End the shootings and the violence/Show the voice of the youth can't be silenced?*

## Losing Patience

I have no patience as far as I'm concerned. You could say the slightest thing to me and I'll blow. Being the person I am and living the life I live, you wouldn't have patience either. I been through hell and back before I was even fifteen.

I'm losing patience because I'm tired of my friends dying. I've lost seven people within the last five years.

But who took me back the most was T-Weez. I had just seen him Saturday a couple of days before he died. I seen him, and he was like, "What's up?" I'm like, "What's up, man?" I'm like, "Where you been? I ain't seen you in a minute."

He was like, "Man, ninjas trippin'. Ninjas is dyin' for no reason." I was like, "Man, for real." He was like, "Be safe." I'm like, "Man, you too."

I hugged him. I'm like, "I love you bra. Keep your head up."

With the being said, we went our separate ways. Only if I knew that would be the last time I seen him I would have never let go when we hugged. I miss my ninja man for real. And I'm tired and fed up with my people dyin' from gun violence.

**-Cash**

*From The Beat: We wish more young people would lose patience with the gun violence that seems never to end. We're very sorry about T-Weez and all the other young people who have paid the highest price in a "war" with no exit strategy. What are you doing to try to end this violence so that you won't have to mourn any more fallen friends?*

## Losing Patience

Recently I've been trying to be patient just being here in juvenile hall. I'm trying to keep my mind focused on the fact that I am going to see my family soon.

Growing up I have been impatient, always rushing into everything.

Lately I have had a lot of time to myself, sitting in my jail cell just waiting for that day to come when I'll be reunited with my loved ones. Day by day, waking up go to school, staying on schedule here, it drives me crazy. A short 5 minutes to shower, the nasty food, this is a lifestyle I have to get used to. This time it's starting to take a hold of me. Part of me just wants to sleep, but I continue to push myself to do better.

Sometimes all that room time has me going crazy. I'm on the verge of losing my mind. I'm doing my best to be patient but at times I find it difficult. Until my release, I'm gonna keep my head up and keep going.

**-Laura, Alameda**

*From The Beat: You say you have to get used to this life, but don't get too used to it! This is temporary, and if you keep your cool, you never have to come back. We are encouraged to hear that you are trying to push yourself to do good—keep it up!*

## Quitting The Bad Life

What I want people to know is that the things I say is true. I want people to listen about my life.

I quit all this bad stuff — quit smoking weed, go to school and learn. Learn about good things like how to do science and to go to school every day. I quit wasting my time in drugs. I rather waste my time in school and do homework, be with my family, get my mom back and be with my mom.

**-Geordi, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: Are these changes that you've already made, or things you plan to change? If you follow through on these promises, we think you'll find that going to school is never a waste of your time. Sometimes it's boring, but it opens doors for you and promises a much better future. We hope you do just what you say you're going to do.*



## They Don't Know What It's Like

Sitting in this jail  
 From a cell  
 Having your mama kiss you  
 County and staff are fake and all they do is dis you  
 Withhold mail and lock you up  
 Because they don't know what it's like  
 All they do is talk smack to you on the buzzer  
 Through their mike  
 Asking why you put up a fight  
 I just try to relax sometimes and write  
 Trying to release anger 'cause I feel I wanna scream out  
 Beam out 'cause they taking hell a long to send me to camp  
 At first I was amped now I'm just cramped  
 I wake up in the middle of the night and  
 Can't even turn on a lamp  
 It's just messing with me everyday is the same  
 But maybe it's a lesson 'cause jail's making me insane.

**-Kyle, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Now that you're in camp, it's better because you have more freedom. On the other hand there's also more drama, and on HV's, more temptation. Now that you can compare them both, which is easier to deal with?

## Power Without Violence

I do believe that there is power without violence. You just have to humble yourself and don't let things tick you off like name calling. Just have the power of knowledge and let your words carry the power.

**-A humbled man, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We can tell you have a lot of powerful thoughts behind this writing. Being humble does have a lot to do with anti violence - in fact, it seems close to impossible to find a humble person who uses violence to get more power. Your words in this piece are powerful in itself. We only wish you had written more.

## Losing Patience

Man, for the past year, my dad and I have been having money troubles. I was being calm about the whole situation...until just recently when I decided to rob somebody...

And look where I'm at now...this situation is also one that I've been patient about for the past month and 11 days...I've been patient, but I'm losing it! I feel like I'm going crazy up in here! Not saying I'm going to hurt anyone, but I just hate this. Trapped in a room all day, bored out of my mind, I can't do anything but read and do push-ups and sit-ups.

Getting letters from my girlfriend and my girl-potnas, they're all talking about how they miss me and want me to come back and do my "thang," talking about how weird it is when I'm not there.

I'm sitting in my room thinking to myself, "What are you doing here, D? You've got your whole life ahead of you and you're wasting it making stupid decisions, sitting in juvenile hall!" I'm really not a person who can take jail whether it's one more month or seven more! It makes no difference to me because I still can't play football or do anything I want! They tell me when to eat, sleep, take a shower, and everything else! Sitting in here I feel controlled...but hey, I guess this is the price you pay for robbing, taking what ain't mine...This whole situation is out of my control, all I can do is maintain my behavior in the unit and hope for the best on my court date.

**-D, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** To us you don't sound out of control mentally at all - you sound like you are still keeping your mental freedom, your mental strength, and we're glad you hate it in here. It means you'll make sure you never come back!

## Thoughts of a G

Sometimes I wish I could drain my thoughts  
 Play the hand I'm dealt cause I got what I got  
 I love my son but my actions differ  
 Tryna get richer  
 I'm the mind behind the trigger  
 Sipping' on this liquor  
 In here tryin' to picture  
 My baby mama cheatin'  
 Every single weekend  
 The blood that I'm leakin'  
 Females that I'm freakin'  
 The scene is what I'm peepin'/  
 The goals is what I'm dreamin'  
 Time keeps rollin' suns keeps beamin'  
 I could swear the judge is on thetas  
 He better put me on the EM  
 You don't want it bra  
 Sippin' on that hypnotic bra  
 Tryin' to be glamorous  
 Tryin' to roll play for these cameras  
 Noey be the name  
 Hustlin' be the game  
 Pocket full of change  
 With my mind up in a daze  
 Walkin' to the grave  
 Son's callin' my name  
 We one and the same  
 On a one way train  
 Tryin' to get paid  
 Playin' my cards  
 Gotta hustle hard  
 Hardy har har  
 I love you baby boy  
 ....you're the center of my heart

**-Lil' Noey, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Son to Father/Father to Son/He looks for a model/And you are the one/To teach him how to be man/To give him your heart/Lend him your hand/A life without crime might seem strange/But you're his teacher, his king, it's time to change!

## Prison

On the verge of losing my mind  
 With tears like one of a kind  
 Walking toward another corrupted system  
 Having a mind with infinite wisdom  
 All the violence is just an eternal stay  
 But all the fury dies within a day  
 In a place with mysterious people  
 But all the fear flew in a disintegrated circle  
 Now I'm facing a new lifestyle where bars and steel Are  
 the only thing I feel  
 Betrayal is the word commonly found where criminals  
 lurk  
 Underneath the dirt  
 Every move I make, trembles with a shake  
 'Cause every time I wake, it's just another fake  
 It may be a friend who was put on a mission  
 All the transition makes it difficult for tension  
 So all this thought may be a confusion  
 But to the thought of mind it's just a praying confession

**-Ly, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We know how frightening the unknown can seem, but we also know that anticipation is often more scary than the reality you will confront. Betrayal is only one word "found where criminals lurk." It's also possible to find profound friendships, real knowledge and understanding. We're not predicting you will find these things, but only urging you to keep an open mind, to bring a positive attitude to every new experience. Of course there will be negatives, but there will also be positives. Be open to them.

## To My Little Sister

I miss everything about my little sister  
 Even down to her long hair.  
 And I know you remember  
 Those times we would go as a family to the Alameda  
 County fair.  
 But I got caught slippin'  
 And now I'm in Alameda County Juvenile Hall  
 In a tiny ass room with a steel door and four walls  
 And I miss those times  
 Where me and you would save up money and go to  
 Southland Mall.  
 I can't wait to see you Dazia, I hope you are getting tall  
 I hope you're growing up and living up to your name  
 I miss spending time with you at the park  
 And going to baseball games.  
 I'm sorry for bringing hurt and pain  
 And yeah I'm the one to blame  
 I got locked up in February and now it's May  
 But hey you know what they say  
 If you do the crime you got to do the time....  
 But it's going to be ok I'm doing just fine.  
 I can't wait to take you to the park  
 And see the beautiful sunshine...  
 But until then I'll be in Juvenile Hall  
 Writing for The Beat and making these rhymes  
 -Espo, Alameda

*From The Beat: Locked up in Feb and now it's June, we hope you get back to your sister soon/Till then you'll be whistling a jailhouse tune/It's the county's ceiling but the free world's moon.*

*I was born in a violent nature and it will never go away.*

## Looking At My Tan Walls

I've run out of patience sitting in my cell looking at my  
 tan walls.  
 I also lose patience with the judge because I'm ready to  
 go home.  
 I think this being my first time  
 being here has showed me that I need to watch what I  
 say and do.  
 If I lose patience with somebody else I need to just talk  
 to them  
 because if I do anything else I will end up back in here  
 for the second time and that's not what I want.  
 When I lose patience with myself I just sit and think or  
 am my best friend.  
 In my past I always lost my patience with my mom  
 but now I learned how to deal with it.  
 Most of the time when I lose my patience I just walk  
 away or cry.  
 When I'm in my cell I lose my patience and just cry  
 myself to sleep.  
 I think my mom has lost her patience with me  
 because I'm not always doing what I should be.  
 -Alexandria, Alameda

*From The Beat: Alexandria, we are glad to hear that you are learning how to be more patient, and deal with frustration through talking instead of fighting. When you get out, this may be a good time to share your thoughts with your mom, and show her that you are ready to stay calm and focused. And also let her know that you understand what you've put her through.*

## Power Without Violence

I can't be powerful without violence. Violence comes  
 everyday when you are least expecting it. You could be  
 sitting down and someone could come up to you and  
 try to rob you. That's where violence come in at. Or,  
 you could be different gang members, someone could  
 be shooting at you and you pull out your gun and start  
 shooting at them.  
 Violence happens everyday, it is never going to stop  
 unless 5-0 put all the factors and the kids in jail, because  
 that is really who is robbing and killing people.  
 I think people do violent things to protect themselves  
 and get their name known. I don't think there will ever  
 be a time where someone doesn't use violence. It is  
 impossible because we were born to sin so we were born  
 with violence.  
 To me, I don't have a personal power. I was born in a  
 violent nature and it will never go away. When someone  
 disrespects me I would normally go off, but I have learned  
 to let things go, especially in Juvenile Hall. But when I  
 see them on the outs it's a different story. They think  
 they got over, but wait and see!

-Lil' Zea, Alameda

*From The Beat: We understand that some times that's how people are raised. Violence is not something normal. Violence is caused by you and you only. You can't resolve everything with violence, and if you really think about it violence doesn't resolve anything. We understand that at times you need to defend yourself from perpetrators, but just because that may be the case doesn't mean that you can resort to violence with everything else.*

## Spider-Nam

He go ya feel me?  
 He got them clean ass powers.  
 He be doing his thang too, getting all the lil' lady super  
 heroes.  
 Cat woman, that one girl with the white hair.  
 I think he was messing with Lois Lane too.  
 Bra got them spider webs shooting out his wrists.  
 And he could climb walls.  
 That's sick on the real, and he undercover wit' his  
 business.  
 I respect his secrecy.  
 But if I was Spider Man, I'd be like the shhh.  
 Hella web comin out my wrist.  
 Man that'll go! Spider-Nam!

-Mackin'Nam, Alameda

*From The Beat: Your writing in this piece is so alive, it was great to read. You use such good specific details so we get such a great picture, and we feel both a sense of Spider Man and why you admire him. Good work!*

## Losing Patience

I tell you little ones not to come to jail. 'Cause if you  
 come to jail you have to have a lot of patience. 'Cause a lot  
 of people in here have no patience. You to have patience  
 to do one thing at a time. Like the food is nasty. You have  
 to wait till some good food comes and the staff will have  
 no patience with you. And you will get mad and you will  
 cuss the staff out.  
 Believe me I done it before. And after you cuss them  
 out, staff will put you in your room, and you really will  
 have no patience. Believe me. I've done it before. So I tell  
 y'all don't come to jail.

-Lil' J-tuda, Alameda

*From The Beat: That's great that you're giving advice to all the younger folks that are probably lookin' up to you, plus you read it aloud too! Nice job! Now, how do you think you can follow some of that advice that you're giving out? You can't be telling people don't come to jail but you steadily coming to jail yourself. How do you expect them to listen to you?*

## Finally Getting Out

Hey everybody out there. This is your boy Cholo coming from the max unit. Well, I ain't feeling these topics this week, so I'm just gonna write about something else.

Well, I've been locked up since October, '07, and I'm finally getting out next month! In a way, I want to get out, but then I don't. The reason why I don't want to get out is because I'm already used to being locked up. And I'm already 18 years old. So, when I get out, I'm gonna have to find a job and pay rent and things like that. And I don't think I'm ready for that yet.

But then, I do want to get out because I haven't been with a girl for nine months. So I'm gonna go crazy when I get out... if you know what I mean. And I can't also wait to be on the block again. That's what I miss the most more than anything.

But for sure when I get out my main goal is to get a girl pregnant. I really want a kid. Well, Beat that's it for now. So I'm out with mas firme love to all.

**-Cholo, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** The thing we like the most about this piece is that you are mature enough to recognize that freedom is not paradise, and that it carries many difficult responsibilities with it. The fact that it worries you tells us that you are beginning to think like an adult. But, at the same time, you are not an adult, and therefore, we hope you re-think your desire to make a child. Fatherhood is much more than just bringing a child into the world. It is a full-time job that requires you to be there. It means giving up the block and the things that give the system power over your life. The fact that you are here tells us that you should wait to become a father until you are truly ready. Anything else is not fair to your child-to-be.

## Dream

I woke up in a puddle of blood, looking like I'm finished 'cause blood's jumping out of my mouth like Lil' Tay. I'm hit!"

Lil' James holler, "Call the people, my ninja hit!"

My eyes roll back, I hear Reg say, ahh shhh. That's when I started havin' flashbacks 'bout my ways.

Never though I'd see an early grave.

I hit the hospital and they fill me up with I-V.

Can't take the pain, all I'm thinking is won't you die please.

I hear my momma on the elevator going crazy,

All I remember is "not my baby, not my baby!"

I'm trying to fight but I'm burning from this rusty gat, And all I'm thinking 'bout is this I-V and I holler right back

A tear-drop,

I hear the doctor holler surgery,

My last chance to make it through this murder plea,

Then I heard flat line and I woke up sweating.

I tried to tell my ninja but he was resting'

I had a dream that I was at the fair with my chick,

And he was with his click at the fair with his stick.

He had on all black and his hair was in twists,

Watching his every step

'Cause I know this ninja will leave me stankin'.

I know this ninja will, and he did,

Caught me slipping by the ferris wheel

And let me have it right there,

My old lady and my son right there,

He didn't care, he just kept dumping

...but my heart pumping.

**-Lil' Jamoni, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This waking nightmare felt all too real. You made us feel your pain for real. Revenge is too much on your mind, time to fast forward, don't rewind, you got your second chance now take it, think about the future so you can make it!

## Mon Cherie

Ton Souris

Ton Souris, c'est la joie de ma vie,  
C'est ce que je pense jour après jour,

D'et le moment que tu ma dis bonjour,

Je voudrais ton amour,

Et je l'avais

Tu tiens mon Coeur

**Jus'qua la jour que je meure.**

**From The Beat:** C'est un poème agréable d'amour et il est bon de voir un comme cela dans le français. Continuez votre écriture et permettez-nous d'entendre plus de vos mots romantiques.

## The Love of my life

Your smile,

Your smile, is the joy of my life

It's what I think of day after day

From the moment you said hello,

I wanted your love

And I had it,

You have my heart

'Till the day I die

**- Sjg, Land Of Enchantment**

**From the Beat:** This is a nice poem of love, and it is good to see one like this in French. Continue your writing and let us hear more of your romantic words.

## My Mind

My mind's similar to a sponge, soaking up game.

It's a mystery what I turned out to be.

The system's trying to play me like clay.

They say we terrorized the block.

Looking at my clock, feeling grief because God took away my wings.

Now I'm trapped in the darkness with the devil.

He sits on top of an iceberg, with no kindness, and I'm trying to reach his level.

**-Oscar, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat:** Good writing Oscar. You really turn it on in the home stretch. We bet you're a better writer than that fellow on the iceberg.

## You And I

I'm not surprised 'cause you told me what you told me, you did it 'cause you know me, see that's been official, I love you but I got to let you go

I don't see no possibility that anything can go

And I don't like what hurts more

The fact that everything we had before was everything that I was looking for

Or the fact I ever love you told you that I trust you

You throw it in my face and told me, screw you

But you see the truth is, I loved you and I prove it

But now I realize that that was stupid

I gave you something that I never gave My heart in every way trying to make a better way

I never thought I say what I'm about to say

I wish you all the luck in the world, I'll be ok

That's firme, I'll take it right back where I started I rather be alone than be with you, broken-hearted

**-Bic, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Powerful poem. Many of us can relate to your situation. We've all loved people who have hurt us, people we may be better off with. There's a saying in Spanish, Mejor solo que mal acompañado, which means "better off alone than in bad company." It takes a very mature person to realize this. It's hard but sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do.



## If I Was A Superhero!

Hey Beat! What's crackin'? Me just about to write about this topic. So about this week's topic. When I was little I grew up with those old-school super hero's, like Batman, Superman, X-men, Spiderman, etc.

I sometimes do imagine about having super powers. I imagine about being able to fly, being super fast, being able to go through walls, being super strong, telekinesis by being able to move things around, and being immortal.

I know right now I would probably use it to do bad things like rob. But sometimes I think about being around the world and helping the people that are suffering in third world countries. I would probably fly and take food to all the starving and people in need. Wars mess up the planet so I would probably intimidate those who cause the wars. I would help my community. But I would also have to do my own thing. That be cool also if other people had superpowers and were evil so I can fight them. That's not good but I need to have a challenge. I know there would be people that also would have powers for good.

I would be laughing if they made my own cartoon and movies. I would be famous having my own comic books, trading cards, and even my own video game. Well that's only daydreaming. But still at least I know I got a good imagination. It's good to have a little bit of kid in you. Alright then that's all for now Beat. Alrato.

- Victor, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** We totally agree that it's good to have a little kid in you Victor. It's important to keep a youthful heart. It seems from your piece, though, that you would struggle between doing good with these powers and not-so-good things with these powers. From what we've seen from you, we sincerely believe you would choose to do good. It says a lot about you that you're thinking about these things too. Keep up the good fight.

## Next Life

As I hear the birds call

I whistle in return -

seeing blurry visions of my death,

watching my body burn.

Some call it a nightmare.

I call it my final release

from the drama with this lifestyle

and the hell we call the streets.

I'll be down until I'm dead,

so until then I'm still troopin'.

Some homies tend to drift away.

But in the end, we're still regroupin'

in walls of this jungle,

or a place called thugs mansion.

We'll still be a family. It doesn't matter

what happens. Some homeboys

wanna talk and show their true sides,

doing what they think they gotta do,

saying they only got one life.

So, life might be the price,

and 'til my judgement day

I'll be thinking about what my next life brings

as I sit here and listen to the birds sing.

-Mike, Santa Cruz

**From The Beat:** Mike - better to listen to the birds sing and think about this life, the only one you know you have for sure. You have occasional moments of brilliance, as a writer. Consider what you might accomplish if you took yourself seriously. Forget that 'thugs castle' business. You've got bigger dreams, better dreams. Do your very best in this life and you won't have to waste time thinking about the next.

## STANDOUTS ALAMEDA COUNTY

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## Wanting Something So Bad

Sitting in this camp makes a person want a lot of things that they feel is unreachable, so today I'm going to speak on that.

Being in camp it makes me want so much I feel very necessary, like being able to go to school of my own free will or doin' something special for my mom or grandmother and going to my junior prom, playing ball wit' my baby brother ...stuff that I miss doing -- even punkin' my lil' sister to stay away from other dudes!

Or even just being able to be outside freely so now I see why older heads tell us to value everything that I got right here in front of me but I push it away like some young street punk. Then I'm not going home 'cause of stupid ninjas around my way ....but it's good 'cause I'm 'bout to come out to play.

-Lil' Solid

**From The Beat:** The things you miss while you're locked up are also the simple joys you will want to focus on when you get out, because as you already know, it's a lot of stress on the outs. Staying in the family circle and studying - well, we hope both of those things are part of your long-term strategy.

## Losing Patience

I'm losing patience with fools who take my kindness for weakness.

-ABCg

**From The Beat:** It makes sense that when people read you wrong, especially if you feel they're disrespecting you, you might start losing your patience. When this happens, you're probably the one that feels the frustration the most—is there any advice you'd give others in this situation? Anything you can do that helps you when you feel this way?

## Cheese Eaters

I'm tired of these cheese-eating ninjas on the streets  
 hating

Mad 'cause ninjas doing it live and they faking

Me and my ninjas stay strapped like Rambo

But they be looking at my pocket and asking where I'm  
 'bout to go

It's cheese eaters in every hood

But they always talking bout if 5-0 get me I never would.

-Dirty D.

**From The Beat:** Don't think about the cheese-eaters. Make your own life better. Let them eat cheese, you eat legit cheddar.

## Patience With My Brother

This is ya boy Lil' Miami, telling y'all about patience.

Man, to tell you the truth, I lost all my patience with the world especially with my brother. I just talked to him Monday and the way he talked to me it was like drugs just took over my brother's mind. I have lost all patience with him, I'm telling you, I nearly am afraid for him. I love that ninja with all my heart!

-Lil' Miami

**From The Beat:** It must hurt the heart, watching a loved one struggle and not being able to help him. But right now, it's about looking out for you, Lil' Miami - you know the expression "Keep your eyes on the prize," right? So tell us, what is your prize?

## Helping Hand

I need a helping hand  
Because I can't understand  
Why? I'm sitting here in the hall dealing it like a man  
When I should be at home with the family  
Relaxing, and rehearsing songs with the band  
Turning on the TV to watch the show Gangland  
Because I understand  
That our community needs a helping hand.

**-Steven**

**From The Beat:** We too can't understand why you're here. Wouldn't you rather be out having fun with your family and friends? Wouldn't you rather be wearing your own clothes and eating whatever you want? If you need help don't hesitate to ask us or any of your loved ones.

## I Can Do It

Hey Beat, what's good? This yo' girl Crystal, just dropping a line. I can't wait, I'm about to be eighteen, and I'm getting out soon. I ain't gonna lie, I am kinda scared to be eighteen 'cause now I don't have moms to lean on.

Man, it's so much stuff going on at home, I'm happy not to be going back. Moms is tryin' to take custody of my daughter because she don't think I can do it, but I know I can, I just need help. It seems like now that I am asking for help, it's too late. I know that I can do it, and I can't wait to prove to the world, "I CAN DO IT!!"

**-The King's Wife**

**From The Beat:** We believe you can do it, but HOW will you do it? There are people on the outs you need to avoid, people on the outs you need to seek out... and you'll need real support. Where are you going to get that support?

## I'm Back

What's good Beat? It's yo' boy Shorty from Hayward. I know I haven't written to the Beat for a while, that's because I been out handling my business, but I am back so let's see...the reason I came back is because I beat someone up for threatening me, but unfortunately I am back so I got to make the best of it, feel me?

But besides that, I am mad that I am back. I might be going to CYA, that is if they find me guilty, but if not, I'll be back in the hood kicking it with the homies.

But yep, that's all. Oh, and for all at camp, keep yo' head up and don't run, just do your program so you can get out and go home. So just pimp that shhh and much love from yo boy.

**-Shorty**

**From The Beat:** The problem is that you don't seem to have any plan for how to make your life better when you get out. If you DO go back to the homeboys, then honestly how long do you think it will be before you find yourself right back in jail? Is it worth trying something different next time?

## I Miss Home

I miss my mother and I miss my father  
Being here in jail makes my life harder  
I miss my sisters and I miss my daughter.  
Missing my love ones pushes me to go home faster.  
I'm tired of jail it seems like I'm in living hell  
When I feel lonely there is no one  
To talk to there is no one to tell.  
I keep it to myself I cry on my own I  
miss my loved ones I miss my home.

**-Big M**

**From The Beat:** We bet everyone who reads this will feel what you're describing. It's hard to be cut off from your loved ones. What do you do to keep yourself focused and out of trouble?

## Miss The Fam-Bam

Hey Beat, yep I was with my family, it was cool, I had everybody come over and had a fat party for me.

My mom and my brother came over and I had hella fun. It was cool being with the fam-bam.

Now that I am back, I wish I never did what I did, but now I just got to deal with it, feel me. Now that I am locked up AGAIN, I really miss my family but I go back to court on the 23rd, then the 30th, so we'll see what happens. But that's all for this week, much love.

**-Shorty**

**From The Beat:** It's like a revolving door, in/out/in/out. You deserve better than being stuck in this cycle, don't you think? What keeps bringing you back?

## My 2008

What's up Beat? Nine months of being caught up in the juvenile justice system but next week I'll be on my way out of this place. Hopefully I'll get release but I expect the worst. Once I get out I'm never coming back I hate this place until next time I'm gone.

**-Lil' Mang**

**From The Beat:** Good luck, and don't be a stranger to The Beat!

## Taking Yourself

What's up Beat? I wanted to talk to you about my potna. He took himself away with a bullet, he was my closest friend and what I want to say is don't take yourself away ... RIP Malo aka Lowkey.

**-Snowman**

**From The Beat:** We're so sorry to hear that you lost your friend. Did you know he was struggling or did his death come as a complete shock?

## I Got The Power!

I got the power walking up and down my street  
I got the power I'm by myself 50 hood ninjas deep  
I got da power illegally getting rich  
I hope I got enough power so the ninjas won't snitch  
I got the power my dude run the spot  
I hope he got enough power 'cause the hood is getting hot  
I got the power smacked off these pills  
I guess I ain't have enough power 'cause  
I smacked myself right up 150th hill

**-Donnetra**

**From The Beat:** Good point, we like how you set it up so you seemed in control and hooked us in - then at the end you showed us how all that so-called "control" can mess you up. Are you basing this on what you've been through, or what you've seen?

## Shhh Happens

Sometimes we wonder why this happens, and why that doesn't.

I guess shhh happens, that's why I live my life day by day, and maybe that's why I came back to the hall. I don't know, I wish I did, but again shhh happens so we really don't know what's coming around the next corner.

That's one thing I wish I could find out, but since we can't, I hope for the best and expect the worst, so that's what's on my mind. Write more next time.

**-Lil' One**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you don't think you have any control over your life. But you do! Think of the decisions you made on the outs that kept you out of jail, or the ones you made that brought you TO jail. You have more control than you think!

**Soon!!!!**

Soon I'll get released.  
 Soon I'm going to be a father.  
 Soon my life's going to change.  
 Soon will be a free man.  
 Soon I'll say screw the system.

I'm so happy that soon everything that I wanted will  
 come true,  
 I thank God for having patience with me and not letting  
 me down,  
 I thank the judge for giving me one last chance...  
 To be continued...

**- Gordo**

**From The Beat:** "To be continued" is right - because now you are moving on to the next chapter in your life. Keep us posted and let us know how your story turns out!

**Hood Power**

Violence is not a necessary ingredient of power. You could have power without violence but you would have a different kind of power. When you use violence to get power it make your power like hood power or something like that. Street power rather. Street power come with a lot of fame and honor. So if you ask me no violence is not a necessary ingredient of power but in my hood, it's almost mandatory.

**-Tay**

**From The Beat:** That's a good way to put it - hood power versus world power. The problem with hood power is that it's too easy to lose to a bullet or a cuff. Is it possible to survive without fighting for hood power? And focus on getting that world power instead?

**Lost My Patience**

I already lost patience coming here. I know not to get in trouble, so I won't come back. Not to hang out with those who get me in trouble.

Also to make the right decisions. I would just back off of people and walk away so I wouldn't hurt them. To lose patience with myself I would just have to talk to someone close.

My mom lost patience with me because I started to get in trouble and got locked up.

**-Alex**

**From The Beat:** A lot of times we get very frustrated and lose patience with something we really want and can't have (like getting out), and then as soon as we get it, we take it for granted. What are things you think you can do to avoid this trap? You said something about making the right decisions - what decisions are the right ones for you?

**Caught Up**

I'm caught up in the game  
 Drugs violence and this juvenile hall stuff got me crazy  
 insane  
 Too many youngstas poppin' pills puttin' holes in they  
 brain  
 Thinkin' pimpin', and sittin' on the thang  
 Got to feed they family,  
 All they know is to slang  
 Swollen brains for disrespecting blocks and turfs  
 End up in that black casket in the back of the Hearst

**-P-Bunion**

**From The Beat:** The game you describe is tragic, but it's yourself that can set you free/Your power with words is magic/If you're locked up in a game, your intelligence is the key/to open the door to the world outside/where there is more to do than grind or ride/or cry for those who've killed or died/if you go back to school and live with square - with pride.

**I'm Gonna Shine**

Man I'm tired of this Juvy System. Free my bra bras and me man Why can't I just go back to the old days. Now my bro' lookin' at six years. It's good though, he's gonna get out and shine. Me I promised him to do good and stop kickin' it with all these fake people. So when I get out I'm gonna shine for him.

**-Repo**

**From The Beat:** How are you going to shine? What is your plan? You already know that the minute you turn 18 it all changes. You'll have more freedom, you'll have more responsibility. What will you do with both?

**How The Police Act**

In my neighborhood the police act like pigs, and how they act like pigs is because they will drive up on you and take all yo' money and they don't even have to find nothing, they will accuse you of doing wrong. When you try to get your money back downtown they look at you like you a fool, and not just that, when they raid your house they can find dope and money and they will keep it. I mean all the money and some of the dope and then give you a case!

After that, they take you to jail and when you get there they make you pay for everything and if you don't you can starve so out the whole deal you in custody and off the street and they get paid the whole way around and when you get out you still got to pay for what they put on you so that's why the police is scandalous.

**-Talee**

**From The Beat:** This is a really hard topic you bring up. Do you think the problem is the few shady police officers, the system, or both? If you could change things around to make them fair, what would you do? It's so hard feeling like you're being treated unfairly, especially if it's the people who help run the system you live in. Thank for your thoughts and keep writing! Lastly, if this doesn't teach you that crime doesn't pay, what will? Leave the shady cops and the drugs alone!

**Losing Patience**

Being in here you a run out of patience not know what's gon' happen on yo' court date, keep detaining you, tellin' you to come back in two weeks, detained, they act like the days don't add up or something haha!! But I'm gonna do this lil' time knock it out for me!!

**-Lil' Fred**

**From The Beat:** Spending your time waiting to find out how long you have to wait to get out is so frustrating, no wonder you're losing patience. What does that mean to you though? How can you tell when you're losing patience - do you get angry? Upset? We want to know how this affects you.

**I Lost My Family**

Some people say their family is always there for them, but it's different for me. Everyday since I've been locked up in this Hell, my family has lost their patience and disowned me.

The first time in my life that I really needed them, they turn their backs. The only family I got left is my mom, and my baby sis. My mom has always been there for me and always will. Sometimes I wish she wasn't because all the pain I have caused her! I

Pray every night so my sis' don't follow my path. My hood homies been there since I can remember. It's one of the only things I have left. To all keep your head high.

**-Dopey**

**From The Beat:** The thing is, they may be there for you, but they're in trouble themselves, so in some ways all they can do is pull you into more trouble. We're not saying the love isn't real - we just wonder if homie love is going to get you where you need to be.



## Power Without Violence

I think violence is really the way young people is using, because that's the only thing that comes to mind. And then they end up in a really serious situation that is really bad too, because they choose the violent way to go.

Also, when people try to do the right way, some people just don't listen to what they tryin' to know what's going on. And then when that happens, that's when they feel like they can't go to one that could help them out with their problems they got going on. But there is some people in the world that could change their life and not turn to violence and look forward to life.

**-Lil' Joe**

**From The Beat:** You bring up some interesting thoughts. Why do you think violence is the first thing to come to mind? Why not talking first? Sounds like you've been in a situation where you tried talking and it didn't work so you used violence instead. Maybe it's time you become one of those people in the world you wrote about that can change their lives and not use violence anymore!

## Times Get Crazy

Man I'm tired of this place, I'm going crazy. I need to get out, this place is really making me go crazy. It used to not matter to me coming here but when you start to come here a lot, one day when you come here it will just damn get to you like damn why I keep coming back. It's really crazy like damn.

Ain't you tired of this shhh already? Tired of wastin' your mom's time comin to visit you, stressing your mom and yourself. I know it's hard when you out, and you need money, you just don't care. You do what you got to do to make money. But just think damn, that shhh lame, lock up all the time.

**-Nguyen**

**From The Beat:** Maybe there are things you can do to get money that don't land you back in the hall over and over again. You know you don't want to be locked up anymore, and you know what you can do to keep that from happening. Just listen to yourself, keep your desire to be on the outs even after you're actually out!

## What's Up Beat

It's ya boy Lil' Black. I been here for a minute, but you know, shhh happens. When I get out I'm gonna try not to come back.

I go to court tomorrow, I hope they give me a release. If they don't I'ma cuss the judge out. But if I don't, you know I'm gonna come back and do my weak program. But you know I'm tryin' to go see my girl. But once again, shhh happens. But I gotta go to my room, so peace.

**-Lil' Black**

**From The Beat:** You can do more than try not to come back. Sure, shhh happens, but that doesn't mean you can't do anything to stop it. You have choices, and you can decide for yourself not to do anything that could land you back where you don't want to be, where a judge gets to decide where you stay and what you do.

## "Super Hero"

If I can be a super hero I would have special powers, like I can fly. I got too much problems with the law and I would wish that I can fly away from here and go somewhere far away. But at the same time I want to change the hands of time. I would be able to fix my life and be able to start over new.

**-Tommy**

**From The Beat:** Those are both really awesome powers to have. Being able to escape or start over isn't only possible with superpowers though. You can't change the hands of time, but you can start fresh, pick a new path now. You have so much time ahead of you, there's no better time than now.

## Free Me Now

Free me now 'cause I could do better.

Free me now so I could go to school.

Free me now so I could take care of my family.

Free me now so I could do my purpose in life.

Free me now so I could prove to people I am not the failure they think I am.

Free me now so I can make my money.

Free me now so I can be with my lady.

Free me now so I can live my life,

Free me now.

**-Lil' Mike**

**From The Beat:** This cry for freedom speaks straight to the heart - and you'll have that freedom soon. In the meantime, have you had time to think about your purpose in life, about your long term goals, about your past mistakes? Are you ready for freedom?

## What's Hangin' Beat

What's up Beat, man this ya boy Lil' Fred, back in this thang. They tryna send me to group home or camp, I go to court tomorrow.

Hopefully when I get out I stay out and move on to better things. Start rappin again and getting in the studio make hits again to stay outta trouble. Do the things I gotta do to get on track, start kickin it with my mom and just stay out the streets 'cause it ain't safe out there man.

**-Lil' Fred**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like a good plan. Just what you must do to keep yourself from coming back. Do you think it would be harder for you to keep yourself out if you end up in a group home or camp? Do you need to make yourself a back up plan in case that does happen? It's a possibility, so it's always better to prepare yourself before the results are in.

## Super And Invisible

I don't got a favorite superhero but anybody invisible, I got respect for them heroes. I wish I was invisible to get out of here.

This is not the place for me. I got so much to think about in here, but I really don't think on the outside. Now I think and all I want is one more chance to show everybody I can do something with my life.

I just want to get out, go to school, and be with my family. Forget my friends. I'm not even worried about them.

**-Mike**

**From The Beat:** It makes total sense that all you want to do is be at home with your family again. But like you said, you think that now because you have so much time to think, but when you're on the outs you don't think about that stuff. Maybe there's something you could do, put on your wall in your room at home or something, to keep reminding yourself to think about that stuff when you have your freedom back, to keep appreciating it, so you won't end up back in the hall wishing you had it back.

## Being a Young Man

It's having your own little cousin

And doing things on your down little cousin

And trying to succeed little cousin a

And trying to get your own apartment

Living on your own little cousin

Taking care of your own responsibility at all times little cousin

And holding your own little cousin

**-Young Man**

**From The Beat:** We cut the last bit of your piece because that is NOT the advice anyone should take. Think of how many people have died, how many mothers have cried, on account of people following that advice?

## Superpower

If I had a superpower I would want it to be to be able to rewind time.

**-Darelle**

**From The Beat:** What would you do with your power, and why would you want this one in particular? No more one liners – give us more writing next time!

## Pimpin'

Well court is coming up and I know I'm going home. Well...I think if I believe in something hard enough that it will come true, so yeah I'm going home.

The only reason my PO is trippin' is because my dad used to be a pimp. They think I'll become one even though I'm a female. I'm irritated because my dad doesn't even seem like he used to be one. He raised all of his kids, he's a family man. Well we'll see what happens.

I have goals for when I get out. School, a job, my permit. By the summer time I'll have my car. I've been in here a month and one week. I can't complain because people have been in here longer. I just have to remember they can't keep me locked up forever. I have a life to live and goals to achieve. When I get out my life will start over, fresh.

**-Lizzie**

**From The Beat:** Lizzie, thank you for sharing your goals and dreams. You have so much going for you in this life, and we would hate to see you ending up on the wrong path and back in jail. Stay focused, and you can do great things!

## Free Me Please

What's up Beat? Well I know my topic is something that everybody in this situation wants. But I believe that we all have weakness. But I don't want my weakness to always be being in juvenile hall, but it to be not doing my best at something.

As God says, "you must obey the laws of the land." But thanks for listening.

**-Gone Bad Reese**

**From The Beat:** This piece is little confusing Reese. What do you mean by the quote you refer to? What does it mean to you, and how do it relate to you wanting your weakness to be not doing your best? We want you to be doing your personal best at the stuff you do.

## Changes

When I get out from here I'm gonna make a change in my life 'cause I have a baby on the way, and I had messed up so many times, but I feel like this is juvenile.

**-Adrian**

**From The Beat:** Becoming a father really makes a difference, doesn't it? What kinds of changes do you intend to make.

## Never Put The Gun Down

Never put the gun down

In my section of my city, we was told never put the gun down 'Cause soon as you put the gun down,

That's when the enemy gonna come around

And you stuck on the scene full of bullet rounds

**-Ronnell**

**From The Beat:** There's another way to look at it too though – which is "Never pick the gun up." We know that even if you stay away from trouble, it can always find you, but there's no reason to help it along. There are plenty of people, even in the roughest parts of Oakland, who find other ways to keep safe: 1. They stay off the streets at night, 2. They stay away from street activity and focus on getting out and away from the block. Are you doing that?

## Losing Patience

I am losing patience because I am supposed to get out of here. The group home was supposed to get me but they're playing and my patience is running real thin. Right about now I am so tired of being in here. I am ready to get the heck out of here and drink and smoke and get some loge! I am so ready to eat regular food instead of this nasty food make you sick!

**- Cheyenne**

**From The Beat:** We know that we sometimes sound like a broken record, but you have to remember, this is JAIL. We hope that this experience prevents you from coming back. If you can stay focused in your group home—do your homework, and stay positive, hopefully this experience will be a foggy memory in your past.

## A Father Figure

Well I'm gone talk about my father. He's a real provider 'cause he puts food on the table. He does everything for the good of his kids, like a father figure is supposed to do, even though I see him every other week.

He drives for a living. I still love him 'till this day. I went on a couple of trips with him and it was fun. He buys me a lot of stuff. He once told me when we had just got done wrestling, "at least I know I'm feeding you the right food." But I respected it. But I'm gone Beat Within.

**-Lil' M-U**

**From The Beat:** Your old man is working as hard as he can to put food on the table, (the right food) and you are paying him like this. Fathers like the one you've described are hard to find. You are a lucky one. There are so many young men who wish they had the one you have. It's time you show this man your appreciation, but not like this.

## Mom's My Hero

My super hero is my mom,

She's strong, brave, respectful, respected, and beautiful. She has a lot going for herself.

My mom is 34 years old, but looks 19.

I love my mom,

she's not easy to talk to, but when we do talk, she's understanding.

My mom makes me (me). Without my mom, I'd have no idea who or where I'd be.

My mom makes me (me) and I love her for her courage, and support

she shows and gives me.

My mom is strong physically and emotionally. I love you mom for being you.

**-Brianna The Lady**

**From The Beat:** We appreciate hearing about your mom Brianna. We hope that with your mother's guidance and support, you can stay strong and free.

## Where Do You See Yourself In 10 Years?

In ten years I see myself driving a cool car in Oakland, with paper in my pocket and a blunt in my mouth.

And I see myself in the hood like always, but I'ma still have a job. I don't see myself going to jail anymore but I'ma still be a gangsta on the block 'cause I ain't fake and I'ma always represent.

I see myself with a kid and a BAD chick. And I'm gonna still be riding and getting on with my boys and homies that I grew up with.

**-Carlitos**

**From The Beat:** It seems like it might be sort of hard for you to both raise your family legit AND represent. How do you intend to do that, and still be there for your children and your work?

## Group Home

What's up Beat? So I am going to a group home down in LA for two years for something I didn't do. But for being in the right place at the right time is making me pay the price. But it's cool, I do my time and get out.

So tomorrow I go to court but I know what they going to say. Group Home.

**-Chetto**

**From The Beat:** What is it about going to a group home that you don't like, or are you dreading it just cause it's in LA? It must be so frustrating feeling like you're being punished for something you didn't do. But like you said, at this point you just gotta do your time and get out. Best to you!

## Losing Patience

I'm tired of bein in here, it's not cool. You gotta eat this nasty food being locked up for something I didn't do.

When I get out I'm gonna go to school and not be no fool because I let the streets get the better part of my life and it ain't nothing nice stayin' out all night and that ain't the life I want to live anymore.

It's not getting me anywhere. Getting shot at everyday. I ain't gon' lie, me and my hood we get down.

**-Lil' Ree**

**From The Beat:** What was so appealing to you about life on the streets originally? It's great that you feel like you don't want to do that anymore, but what can you do to make sure once you're released you don't go back to the streets? Making a plan for yourself is the best way to avoid ending up back in the hall, and quit the bragging how big and bad you are!

## You Can't Have Power Without Violence

You can't have power without violence because if you get into any argument with anybody in the street, there's always going to be violence involved. People think that without violence, it's never going to be solved

**-G.**

**From The Beat:** But do you know any people on your block, elders for example, whom people just respect because they are good people - who could break apart a fight or a conflict before it got too heavy?

## If You Could Have Any Job, What Would It Be?

If I would ever work, I would work with kids. I never had problems with kids, I used to take care of little kids making money, well actually, I would make someone take care of them for free ...and say it was my kid.

**-Adrian**

**From The Beat:** Would you want to work with kids as a fulltime job? As a counselor, a coach, a teacher? What age group would you like to work with?

## Is It Worth It?

All the things I do, is it worth it? I do too much stuff for people to know me. But will I be remembered? I think not. I do all those things for people to know me, but I know one-day people will forget about me.

They will forget about the little Asian guy that put in a lot of work for his gang. The one Asian guy outta his hole gang that stay out on the block all night to make all his money. But was all that worth it? Stayin' out hitting all those licks. I was shining to people like it was nothing, but yet was all that worth it?

**-Lil' Rikki**

**From The Beat:** You are learning! You won't be remembered. We can't understand why you continue doing things for others to see, if they won't appreciate your effort? What's the point? What exactly are you trying to prove? Was it worth it? What do you think? You asked a question without giving the answer.

## Losing Patience

What's up Beat? I went to court today and they told me to come back in two weeks.

I am starting to lose patience on not being sentenced. I'm getting super mad because I have been waiting about a month and a half. I am not just impatient in waiting, but also I am getting impatient being back and forth in the same place. But I believe that god don't put too much on you that you can't bear.

**-Gone Bad Reese**

**From The Beat:** It's totally normal that you would be losing patience over this waiting. But as normal as your feelings are, it doesn't change the fact that you do have to wait. Maybe there are things you can do to make the waiting easier. Are there things that help you calm yourself down when you start getting frustrated?

## The Real Me?

...is to get money, have fun, be with my fam, be with my wife, ride with my ninjas, chill all night. The real me, I like to shine and get mine so to all you haters get off me fast, me and my ninjas get it all day ya dig.

**-Lil' Marcus**

**From The Beat:** What are your dreams in the long term... do you expect to still be 'riding with your ninjas' when you are 30, 40 years old? Do you have future dreams and future plans?

## Losing My Ride or Die

Today was a very sad day. My ride or die chick left and I don't know if I will withstand the hall without her. I feel I lost a part of my heart. I feel I lost the ray of my life, the love of my life and also my "Bussit Babe", but I will live and will love her 'til the day I die. I can't wait to get the heck up out of this county. I'm out, peace.

**-Lady**

**From The Beat:** It's sad to see someone you care about leave, but it's great news for her. Hopefully you will be reunited soon, doing positive things together, and not in jail...

## Just Hangin'

What's up Beat? I just hangin'. Trying to make the best out of every situation.

I got six to nine as my time. But I am still grateful because I know a few with a kick stand I pray for their lives and mine. I'm trying to keep my head up and never give up on hangin in there.

I just tell all those who got a long sentence it's not the end of the world.

**-Gone Bad Reese**

**From The Beat:** Some great words of advice you got in here. Maybe you got some advice for our readers on what they can do to try and make the best of their situations like you wrote about. How exactly do you do that?

## Wonder Woman

My favorite super hero is Wonder Woman because she is a girl and she's cool. She takes charge and her little outfit is tight.

If I was her I would fly to Paris and to Mars and do a whole lot of cool stuff. I would go to the bottom of the ocean and swim with the fishes and I would save people who need to be saved like little kids and grown ups from all the villains.

**- Cheyenne**

**From The Beat:** This is a great description of Wonder Woman! Even without super powers, you can still go to Paris and swim with the fishes and save people one day.. the only thing that might be difficult is going to Mars!



## The Girl of My Dreams

When I first met this girl, she was what I wanted. She let this ninja she didn't know in her whip and let me kick it with her. She didn't judge a ninja, she accepted me for who I was. She made a ninja comfortable. She was so sexy, if I wasn't shy I would have tried to get with her, but I was stuck and didn't know what to do.

When I see her again I'm gonna get her and never let her go ever. I don't care if you ninjas think I'm soft, but she's a queen.

Don't trip on yo' time 'cause yo' ninja gone be here.

**-Sydy Bo**

**From The Beat:** It's rare to find a person who really accepts you for who you are and doesn't judge you. What are the personal qualities you'd like to offer in return to someone like her?

## My Mom Lost Patience With Me

The first person who ever lost patience with me was my mom, because I kept getting into trouble at school, and kept getting into fights and getting suspended from school. The reason I kept getting suspended from school was because I was hanging out with the wrong crowd and thought it was cool.

But now that I look back at all that shhh, I know it was hella stupid. That's why when I get out, I'm gonna do better for me and mom.

**-Lonnie Bo**

**From The Beat:** Do you have a teacher you like that you can talk to? Did coming to the hall help you decide to make a change in your mind?

## Waitin'

What's up Beat? Me nothin' just hella bored waitin' to go back home soon because this place hella boosie. I just waiting to go to court and see what the judge is going to do wit' me. I think he goin' to try to send me to the Y because of what I did, but I did not do nothin'.

I know what I did, and I did not rob nobody. It's just the police don't got nothing to do, just pick people off the street so they can get paid extra money if they pick people that just want to make something out of themselves. So wit' that I will let you go.

**-Lil' Sosa**

**From The Beat:** This world is definitely not a fair one, and fo sho the justice system isn't fair. What kinds of things can you do for yourself, being caught in an unjust situation like this? If someone else came to you with the same complaint, what would you say to them? Does it help to tell your story or get people on the outs to write letters? Does it make you want to keep far away from anything/anyone that could get you in trouble when you're on the outs? Is there anything that can help you from getting really down about having your freedom taken away?

## Question and Answer

What are you most likely to get tempted by?

Lonnie Bo's A: The thing that could probably tempt me so I won't reach my goal to do better is probably getting in all that negative shhh out there again.

Do you have positive friends you could be with?

Lonnie Bo's A: Well, yes, I do have positive friends I could hang out with and yes, my family is positive. And they are good role models.

**-Lonnie Bo**

**From The Beat:** It's good to know you have family you can count on. Do you also play a sport - a coach can help too! Once you are released, stop by the offices and let us know how you are doing!

## Rest In Peace Lil' D

Rest In Peace Lil' D, we miss you boy. I wish we was still together shining on ninjas. I'm gonna get this money for you because on the real, you might be gone and you know I can't speak for everybody, but you're never forgotten.

I remember all the times we been through, good and bad. Ain't shhh the same no more, ninjas getting knocked down. It's 08 so you know we gone do what we gotta do to take care of you. I just want you to know that I love you bra and always will, no matter what, we're all we got boy, cause shhh just too real.

**-Young Purp**

**From The Beat:** How are you going to make that money? What is your long term plan? How do you want to "shine" long term. What about schooling, a job you like, a chance to live somewhere safe for you and your children?

## Death Cry For Attention

He's ringing and ringing calling the phone, death want attention, it's the devil ring tone cry for attention, but there's no answer

keep feeling the trapped and don't want to be pampered

God says He love me, but I don't see it

the devil shows me love, but labeled me a statistic playing trapped in the closet between the good and the bad navigated to the ruthlessness and overlook my pass

I want the best, but get the worse every single time children breed the ruthless; and they committed a crime

We live night and day as the devil playmate death cry for attention, let my soul escape.

**-Lil' Mainy The Prince**

**From The Beat:** It's seems like there is a huge bottle going on over your shoulders. On the right side, you got God telling you how much he loves you and asking you to follow a different path and on the other one you got the devil offering everything there is in this planet; as result, it's obvious the side you've picked. A bad choice! The question is, are you still going to let this side control your life? You got another choice. It's time to pick the right now.

## Losing Patience

I haven't run out of patience yet, but it seems as each day passes, I get to the point where I'm like the hell with this. These ninjas in here can get you upset.

Too many ninjas run they mouth in here, and is not about what they be talking about. See me, I don't come in here telling all these stories about what I've been doing on the outs.

First of all, I don't like everybody in my business. Second of all, I don't trust any of these ninjas. I think it took this time for losing my patience for coming here. I don't really like taking orders.

I just thought about what I can be doing in the West right now. But instead I'm just wasting all my precious time in here. Time is money.

All I could tell ya'll about if I lost my patience with someone, it would not be nothing nice. You can tell good, when I have lost or about to lose patience with someone. You know when you smacking and you see someone you don't like.

Well that's how I feel most of the time in here. There are plenty of people who have lost it with me, and I really don't care. It doesn't matter if a person is cool with me or not. I really don't like anybody in these whole hall period. All right then, I'm out!

**-Oakland youngster**

**From The Beat:** You don't like to take order, but you always end up coming back to a place where you take orders and follow them through. What's that about? Another thing we noticed from your piece is that you dislike what others say, and the only one to blame is nobody else but yourself for putting yourself in this position. If we were you, we would just avoid what others in here say. Worry about getting out and staying out of here.

## I Can't Wait...

I can't wait 'till I get out of here, so I could go on with my life, go back to the house and kicking with some females. I've been dry for bout 2 ½ months. I need to go get some. It's something that needs to be accomplished.

Everyday I wonder who's doing what in Oakland. That's what keeps me going, just can't wait to go back to my 'hood.

**-Oakland youngster**

**From The Beat:** Why getting out, when you will come back again? What do you think you'll get by going back over there? The same thing you're doing here, getting locked up, receiving order from someone you don't know, and not the freedom you were born with. Is this what you want again? If so, go back to your 'hood.

## Power Without Violence

I don't think it is necessary, but it is used anyways. Yea I think we can have power and not be violent. Yea I know a couple people who have power and are not violent by how they carry themselves.

I think that I might. The power comes from your mind. I use it when it is necessary. No I do not believe the old saying ["the pen is mightier than the sword"].

**-Chuckie**

**From The Beat:** That's great that you have seen people who carry themselves in a powerful way. What tells you that they have power? Is it the way they look at people, the set of their head, the way they hold themselves up tall or seem to take up space side-to-side? When you use your sense of internal power, how do you do it? Does it work?

## Change What Happened

If I can change what happened I would go back to see who got robbed. But they keep saying the dude who got robbed didn't see me, but this girl keeps saying she did.

I think it's because she don't like me and I don't like her, so I think she's the reason I'm here.

**-Bad News**

**From The Beat:** The real issue is do you think you'll be able to stay away from the people and situations that got you caught up? The witness is a minor part of the equation – the action is why you're here, right?

## All The Powers

If I had super powers,

I would love all the powers.

I love powers and stuff like that.

Powers are very special to everybody.

I would do good with my powers, if I had them.

I would be a hero.

**-Love Power**

**From The Beat:** So are you saying you'd want to have all the powers? Flying, fighting, turning invisible, teleporting... being a super-genius who could build anything?

## Complaining!

Stop complaining! I'm irritated when females come in here trippin' all the time, talking about how they need to hurry up and get up and get out and two weeks is too long. Some people are in here for months. All you have to remember is that they are not gonna keep you in here forever. Whatever you did that got you in here is gonna determine how long you're in here. So you shouldn't have been messing up on the outs if you gonna come in here cryin'.

**-Lizzie**

**From The Beat:** Hopefully though, people hate jail so much that they make sure not to come back. That's the idea anyway. Do you think this is the reality? Why or why not?

## Superman

I think my superhero would have to be Superman. I would say him because he can do a lot, like fly, use x-ray vision, heat vision and he got super strength.

**-Fat B**

**From The Beat:** Good choice! If you had his power, what would you do with it?

## I'm Gone Get My Life Right

Everyday I live

It was a struggle to survive

I tried to get money the wrong way

Now I'm locked up in cell twenty-five

Being locked up give me a chance to realize

That I really need to open my eyes and be wise

I finally see how it feel to have my freedom taken away

I finally realized that it's a privilege to live everyday

I see now that life is not a joke

I can get money without sellin' coke

I used to dress in all black

'Cause I stayed hittin' licks

I got caught now I'm nextdoor to my cousin

When I get out I'm gone get my life right

I kneel down and pray every night

God gave me a vision

So my future looking bright

I'm not trippin' 'cause I'm gonna make it in life without a tussle or a fight

**-Yung C**

**From The Beat:** Nice piece! Great rhymes and nice flow, especially as you get into the piece. We also appreciate the sentiments of the piece, and so we're wondering, what's your plan to get your life right? It takes a plan and follow-through to make change really happen. We hope you do, so when you on the outs you get to keep your freedom.

## Hard To Live On My Block

It's hard to live on my block. Shhh just too real. It's a crazy environment we living in.

We living in the wild, wild west for real. Every time you step outside your door you gone hear gunshots mostly. Right now, violence is just a way to survive. It's either you gone be in it or not, because you not gone be able to make that choice when it's too late. 'Cause shhh just too real.

The first time I saw a violent crime, I was like 6, that I can remember. It was a shooting.

**-Young Purp**

**From The Beat:** Do you ever dream of getting away from your block.... Or do you wonder what your life would be like if you had grown up in a safer place? Is it hard to find positive things in your neighborhood? - If you wanted to stay out of the heat, what would you need to change about how you lived?

## Tripping Or Getting Mature

I really don't run out of patience, smoking weed keeps me mellow and calm. Nowadays I don't even think of getting mad as because I'm maturing or because I'm tripping.

**- A quick thought**

**From The Beat:** You might be tripping, because if you were getting mature, you would not be here.

## Losing Patience

I don't really lose my patience 'cause I ain't really an angry person. But my mom lose patient with me 'cause I am a bad child.

**-Sereio**

**From The Beat:** That's a good thing for you and bad one to your mom.

## Losing Patience

What I'm losing patience for is when ninjas keep running they mouth. I got short temper and I try hard to hold it in. I been letting a lot of stuff slide but I'm bout to stop because I'm getting tired of these ninjas taking my kindness as a weakness. I'm not gonna let anyone disrespect me.

I'm trying so hard to not get in trouble but if it gets down to it then I'm gonna defend myself. I'm also losing patience for waiting for my next court date because I been in here for six months now and I'm ready to find out and start my time. My time ain't even started yet. My time starts when I leave here.

**-Lil' Kev**

**From The Beat:** You are stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand you don't want to get in trouble, but you feel as if you need to fight to stand up for yourself. Top it off, you aren't even sentenced yet. We think you it's time to look at things from a wider perspective. Let's say someone disrespects you in the hall: is it really worth messing up in there, possibly increasing the length of your sentence, to defend yourself against someone who might not even be worth messing with?

## Life Through My Eyes

Life through my eyes would scare a sucker to death.

**-Magnificent**

**From The Beat:** Sorry to cut up your piece, but this felt more like a boast than a Beat Within piece. You are a really talented writer, so we hope to see more of your work that we can publish.

## Have Patience Or You Don't

I don't have patience for some people, but you have to be patient in the world because that the only way to move on or to get a great job in the long run. If you have patience, you wouldn't let nobody get to you even if they are makin' you mad.

If you don't have patience, you are going to go off on anybody that you believe is messing with you or if you feel that what they are saying can't help you at all. So it leave you with two choices: either to have patience or you don't have patience. I'm one of the people who don't have patience, because I waited long enough to leave and I ran out of patience.

**-Scooby**

**From The Beat:** It sure is hard to have patience when you are stuck in the hall waiting. But we agree with you that patience, along with determination and a clear plan, are going to help you in trying to get a good job or in doing what you want to do in the future. What helps you be patient when you are stuck in the hall? How can you develop your patience now so it'll be there when you really need it?—Like when you're on the outs and working towards your goals (since these will probably take some time to grow).

## Stronger In The Mind

What's up Beat, this ya boy Young Purp back at it again. Ready to go to court in a couple more days so I can plead not guilty. They tryna send me on my way to the Y or the pen.

I'm just gonna knock this lil' time out and bounce back stronger. But I need to be free though cause I'm a star in the hood. I'm being missed by hella people, so I gotta get back.

Free Young Purp,! And what kind of stronger do I intend to be? Stronger in the mind.

**-Young Purp**

**From The Beat:** Stronger in the mind, how? Like tougher? Or more educated about the world? We hope you read a lot in jail: About Malcolm X, Barack Obama, Spike Lee, Martin Luther King, and other men who have found a way to be 'stars' that is way bigger than just the hood. The system can limit your space to six by eight cell, but you are the only one who limits your mind. Set it free!

## Locked up

What's up Beat?

Man it be so cold in this jail

All in these cells some time it be like it's hell

But this is the life I got to live

I got to let it be but fo' sure it ain't for me

I need to live my life

And I need to get out fast like a car need gas

Like a ninja need cash

And if you never been here you don't want to come

It's probably worse than being a bum

What I'm sayin' is that this ain't the life

I want to grow up and live a good life in paradise

But for right now I'm locked up

And all I know is I'm stuck

And this is what I wrote for the Beat

But shhh you know this me.

**-Festy**

**From The Beat:** If you want to grow up and live a good life you need to really think about what you doing. You can expect to lead the good life, but keep coming back and forth to jail. We know you can feel like you're stuck but it's up to you to be hungry for that good life and stop being stuck and get up and go get it.

## I Refuse To Lose Sight

Come out standing tall, even though my future is in the hands of someone that don't know me from Adam and Eve, but I'll be damned if I let this system make or break me. I'm gonna come out standing like a giant that's

twelve feet,

but when I get out, ain't no more doing shhh that could jeopardize me being free.

The system want years of my life,

they want me to cop a plea but I'm trying to see if I should fight,

but if I lose eighteen years is a large portion of my life, an I'm gonna dog so whatever happens regardless I'll

bite,

and no matter the outcome I refuse to lose sight.

**-Lil' New Orleans**

**From The Beat:** You are trying to decide between copping a plea and trying to fight your charges. That's a tough one. It's up to you and your team to make that decision, deciding which will be the best bet, but either way, you gotta find your own way to stand tall. Whatever you do, keep looking at the long term goal of getting out and getting back your freedom. Once you get out, it will take strength to stay away from things that jeopardize that freedom, but we think it's a courageous choice.

## I'm Losing Patience

I'm losing patience being in here, they need to hurry up and come and get me for the Y. I'm losing patience because I'm trying to get out and do my thang and shine on all these ninjaz, all these ninjaz that's hatin. Shine on all these females and shine for my ninjaz in jail. Get my dough and do my thang so can't nobody tell me nothing. They see me and respect me.

But I got a little patience because that's how I'm gon' get where I want to be. But while I'm in here I am getting impatient because I have to do four years, but I'm hopin' while I'm waitin' I can get patience so when I get out I won't have no problem.

**-RoRo**

**From The Beat:** Waiting for the Y, and waiting to do your time, that does take a lot of patience, so we can see why you'd be short on patience. We like your idea of working on it now so you'll be cool at having patience when you get out, since that will take you where you want to be. What kinds of things help you to keep yourself together when you are getting impatient? What would you suggest to someone else in your situation?



## I Rather Be In The Hall

What's up Beat? Well this is young Capy from Oakland. Well I'm back in the hall over some stupid shhh. I'm supposed to be in camp right now but it's all bad. I think I'm not going back to camp, I'll probably go to Santa Rita. But I ain't tripping, I'm gonna be programming up there.

But I'm hella mad I was supposed to get out of camp, but I don't think that's gonna happen no more. But it's coo' though, camp is hella weak. I rather be in the hall kickin' it, reading books and shhh. Well, if y'all go to camp, refuse it or run when you get there because it's hella weak. Well I'm out.

**-Capy**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you got yourself in a situation.... What specific things were weak about camp? Other than getting to do programming, why do you think it will be better at Santa Rita? It's natural to think about the lousiness of where you are now or how much better someplace else will be, but what can you do for yourself when the annoyance at your current situation gets too high and it takes a change on the inside to make things better?

## The Hall

When I come to the hall  
I'm tired of seeing all these walls  
When it's time for LME  
I like to play basketball  
They don't let me use my phone call

**-Tru**

**From The Beat:** You should stop coming to the hall so you can be out free chirping on your metro all day. You can be talking on the phone and playing basketball so you can stay out of trouble.

## Q-Vole Beat

I'm still here hella bored, without nothing to do. Just looking at the four walls. I'm just gonna kill my time so I could get out and be back on the streets with the homies and my main girl.

Well I talked to my ex girl and she told me that she pregnant, but I don't know if it's true. If it is, I guess I'm gonna have to take care of my son or daughter.

Well, I might be leaving on May 21st to ROP and come back to court on August 20th. But I don't know what the judge gonna do with me. Hope he let me out.

I talked to my homie couple of days ago and he told me the hella shhh going out in the streets. I can't wait 'till I get out because I want to be in the varrio (hood) with my homies and smoking blunts and going to parties getting at hynas (girls) so we could be having fun and shhh.

I'm mad because I don't know when my primo (cousin) getting out, but I just wish him good luck.

Keep your head up. Mucho love.

**-Chikillo**

**From The Beat:** We wish you luck whenever you leave to ROR. We hope you think about your life and what you want to do with it. Because going back to the hood and homies is only gonna guarantee you to come back here. So we hope you take this time to reflect.

## Free My Pops

What's up Beat, this your boy Lil' Charlie, just showing some love since I'm going down for a while bra! I'm telling everybody to stay true. Peace, and free my pops, Big Charlie.

**-Lil' Charlie**

**From The Beat:** How long is "a while." Do you know where you're headed? Are you worried? Do you have a goal for when you get out? Or a plan for how to do your time? Tell us more!

## Who Ever Thought

Who ever thought I would be in jail  
Acting crazy tryin' to go dumb in my cell  
Who ever thought it would be me  
Hustlin', shooting guns, committing hella robberies  
Who ever thought my ninja scrilla would die  
By ah ninja who was posed to be on his side  
Who ever thought Davon and JJ would've got popped  
Not me cause I was with 'em on that street block  
Who ever thought I would've been fourteen getting' shot at  
By ninjas 20 and over and they packing them big gats  
Who ever thought I would've got hit  
I don't know but they need to stop snorting that shhh  
What ninjas forgot I'm the baby of the click  
So if you cum my way you gone catch mo den six  
More like 17 rounds of pure hollow tips  
And to tell you the truth bra, I know how to work that shhh  
Who ever thought my cousin Weezy would've got capped  
Now them ninjas is getting laid on they backs  
With big thangs this shhh don't change  
Who ever thought we would lose lil' D  
Fresh out of jail ready to go  
Move mean  
Who ever thought my grandpa would get sick  
Now I'm in the hall mad as shhh  
Who ever thought me and teddy would be in jail  
Now I'm sayin'  
Free me and him in these Alameda County cells  
Who ever thought I would be in this condition  
Lost my pops when I was six 'cause somebody didn't  
like him So they shot him up and shhh  
I damn sure wish I could get ma revenge  
I'm sitting here like damn I miss my family and friends  
Who ever thought?

**-Lil' Al**

**From The Beat:** Who ever thought you would've come to jail? Who ever thought you would've been born? Man, today as we sit here in this here juvenile, what it comes down to is you've got a couple of choices to make, you can keep going down a path that's only gonna lead you to jail time and more deaths, or you can choose another path. The choices are on you and nobody else.

## Why Am I Here

I'm in here for doing some stupid shhh. I'm in here because I was stupid enough to take a gun to school. But I didn't go to school, I was cutting classes with my potnas.

We were smoking a blunt when the 5-0 came and grab us. I had the gun on me but I couldn't run because it was too big, so he dropped me and arrested my ass and now I'm in here serving my time.

**-Whiteboy**

**From The Beat:** You don't need to be cutting classes and packing straps instead. What kind of life are you trying to lead homie? What do you think is gonna come out of going to smoke with yo potnas and packing straps, instead of going to school.

## My Patience Is Short

I lost patience with myself. When I came in here, I couldn't take it. I just didn't understand. My own brother didn't have patience so he ratted on me so now I'm in here trying to have patience with it. I'm trying to have patience with my case, but I'm getting out after my birthday, so I'm cool, I'm going to a group home.

**-Baby Joker**

**From The Beat:** You have to have patience. You had the patience to sit there and do what you did to get locked up. So now you have to deal with the consequences for your actions. All you can do now is focus on your program and try to make things better for yourself.

## Patience

I lose a lot of patience while I'm in Juvenile Hall. The reason being is because time pass by so slow when you're sitting in a small room all by yourself doing nothing but read, sleep, shhh, and work out.

Waiting to go home is like watching the grass grow. Lost all outdoors and phone call privileges. It's taking forever just to get released. No more patience. No more patience. No more patience!!

**-Steven**

**From The Beat:** You have to have patience. You got yourself in this mess, now you have to deal with the consequence. Time does go by slow but that's only because you're not keeping yourself busy and all you're doing is thinking about getting out. You should try thinking about all the things you could do so you can stay out 'cause getting out is the easy part, staying out is the hard part.

## Thinking

I'm here in my room, just thinking about the old times when my uncle, Rest in Peace, was with me. I just sit here remembering hella shhh we did. Since my uncle pass away everything change, is not the same. I miss my Uncle Ruben, I know he resting in a very good place. RIP I miss you tio (uncle).

**-Chikillo**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry to hear about your uncle. We know how painful it is to lose a loved one. We hope that you have a lot of great memories to reminisce about. You can't rewind time, and think about what you could of done, or should of done. But we do hope you could be inspired to live your life in a more positive way.

## Mobbin'

I'm steal and rob  
I stay going on missions  
It's just my ambitions  
Power of violence  
Never mess with ninjas with no sense  
From the east and yes I am a beast  
I get the scraper on fours  
With the color pearl  
And yes I do love pearl  
'Cause I do rule this world  
It's hard for the kid  
To get back on track  
I'll take yo' female and give her back

**-Go Diego Go**

**From The Beat:** If you took your talent for words and rhymes/and used them on school books, and earning your dimes/(legit we mean) with school and a job/no one to beat and no one to rob/you could be more than a jailhouse poet, we know you hope it, now it's time to KNOW it.

## Losing Patience

Yo' boy then already lost patience  
I been here ninety-five days I'm tired of waitin'  
Losing patience make a youngsta go crazy  
Losing patience turn a youngsta shady

I lose patience every single day  
Especially when I don't get my way  
I'm losing patience let yo' boy free  
If you look up lost patience you would find me.

**-Jamarco**

**From The Beat:** Nice piece! In general you got a nice flow and nice rhymes. And we do feel you. Ninety-five days is a long time to wait, especially with more to come. Since you are such a talented writer we are going to challenge you a little to see if you can use some specific images to make your pieces come alive on the page even more, and let the people reading your work feel what you're putting out there on a whole other level. Good work.

## My Case

What's up Beat? Me, I've been up in here for like forty-days in this new hall. Damn, I got tired of seeing the same faces every time. Even the food is getting nasty, way worse than the old hall.

Anyways I just met my new PO on Friday. She told me that by this week I should start getting interviews so I will be out by a month. Well I'm not ever going to come back here. This place sucks.

**-Lil' S**

**From The Beat:** Everybody always complains about the halls only when they're in the halls, but when you're out on the street doing all that hot shhh we bet you aint even thinking about the halls. How are you gonna be different than the rest of the people that are saying that they're never coming back. How do you plan to put those words in action?

## Still Here

What up with it Beat, is me, Whiteboy. I'm still here in this weak place. My PO told me I got to be here for 1 more month and then I'ma go to camp for 6-9 months. I'm hella mad. But I did the crime, I have to do my time.

But I also hella sad because I'm in here and my uncle died. I also miss my boo thang and my family.

That's all I have to say, all right then Beat I'm out.

**-Whiteboy**

**From The Beat:** You said it. You did the crime you do the time. But it can't be like that all the time. We're sorry to hear about your Uncle. And we feel your pain. We know you miss yo' boo, and your family also. But you have to stop committing crimes. You must stay out of trouble so you can be out there with your boo and your family. That way you won't have to be in here writing these kind of pieces.

## Superhero

My superhero doesn't really exist to other people, but he exist to me. He would be black and one of his super powers would be to attract all of the ladies. And his swagger would be super mean but cool at the same time. He would have the power to make money appear in the palm of his hand. Not one dollar but hundred dollar bills and a hundred at a time. And he would have long dreads and a gold grill. And he would be able to fly and knock people out with one punch. This sounds like me in a way.

**- Shady**

**From The Beat:** We liked hearing about your own superhero. Would this be the superhero you could be if you got to be a superhero? What would his ethics be? Would he help his community and city to fight people who were doing bad things on the real, or would he only punch out people who bothered him? Would he be concerned about the greater good or would he mostly be attracting the ladies and producing money for his own pleasure?

## Losing Patience

I'm always lose patience when people tell me they are going to do something and don't do it when they tell me they're going to.

One time I was at my house and my homie said he would be there in a few minutes. And it took him two hours. Another time was when my dad was on his way to see me and I had to do something that was important.

When I get impatient I start to get mad. Sometimes when I get impatient I want to fight anybody who crosses me or looks at me wrong. I just like it when people are on time when they tell me a time. But yeah, that's what I got to say. All right Beat I'm out.

**-Lil' G**

**From The Beat:** We all hate it when people say that they're gonna be there at a certain time but don't do it. It sucks! But regardless, you can't let that get to you. Someone is late they're late. There's nothing you can do, or they can already if they're late. So you should just let that little drama go. It's not worth fighting over, or catching a case over.

## What Of Fame

When every one knows your face  
The whole world screams your name  
Never again are you alone

-Mike

**From The Beat:** We can think of times when it would be useful to be famous, but other times when being known can get you into trouble. Which were you thinking of when you wrote this little piece?

## Ah, To Be A Little Kid Again

Damn gang bang. What a change from bein' young and playin' in the park. Runnin' around in the streets instead of running around in the house. Caged up, makin' moms cry instead of being young and just cry for job.

Man, if only we could be a little kid forever. Society with little kids is pure joy.

-Big Bird

**From The Beat:** Yes, there is something very special about the purity and innocence of little kids. They haven't learned to hate, yet, or to identify "enemies." They still see their similarities with other little kids, and not their differences. Sometimes, when we're really angry at someone, we try to imagine them as a little kid to remember that we were once alike.

## Focused On Having Fun

What's up with The Beat? This that ninja Na-Na writing about having hella fun with my ninjas and blowing fat 'dro with some females.

Man, you know I'm supposed to be up out of here in a couple days. I'm about to skate on my PO when I hit that airport, ya dig. But yeah, this juvenile shhh been crazy since I been in here. But I'm about to be out. I been here for six months and it been stressful like hell.

But yeah, I'm out.

-Na-Na

**From The Beat:** We're not sure what the beginning of this piece has to do with the end of it. You write about having fun with the females, but also that you plan to run before you get to your next destination. Since we know where running leads, we have to wonder whether you really prefer to spend your time locked up with other males. If this "juvenile shhh" is crazy, that maybe it's time to start thinking and acting like an adult.

## Should Patience Be A Virtue?

What's really gutta, Beat? The Skip ninja back live an' direct once again givin' more knowledge. But yeah, I know patience is a virtue, but it's hard to have patience in certain situations.

I was readin' the topic sheet, and it said how people are sick of comin' here. I'ma keep it KI with you. I'm obviously not tired of comin' here because I would have more patience with myself and not come back. But it's really hard though.

-Lil' Skippa

**From The Beat:** You're too good a writer to give us this little bit, Skippa. We need more explanation and examples of what you mean. For example, what do you mean when you say you would have more patience with yourself if you were tired of coming here? Do you think you'll ever get tired of it? Until you get tired of coming here, will you just keep doing the things that bring you?

## Waiting To See

What's good Beat? Me up in here once mo', chilling patiently, waiting to see if I getting out. If not I ain't tripping. I still goin' keep it moving.

-Pb

**From The Beat:** Are you doing any thinking while you wait? If so, are you thinking about ways to stay out of places like this? What have you come up with?

## Reality

I speak the real, not the fake  
I speak to better, never hate  
I love my life and how I live it  
Behind these walls ain't how I'm livin'  
I sit and think of all my wrong mistakes  
You could live the street life if you know and got what it takes

I obviously got caught so it ain't for me to sake  
And danger my life when I know I got what it take

To do right and not wrong  
To stand tall and never fall  
To be strong with all emotions  
And live life without commotion

Sit back, get money, love, freedom, live life  
Respect who loves you and always keep yo' game tight!

-Kristy

**From The Beat:** It's good that you've figured out that you aren't cut out for a life of crime and punishment. Nobody really is cut out for it, but many people haven't figured that out, yet. So, respect those who love you and respect yourself, and this should be your last experience as a guest of the county...

## Missing My Baby

Damn! I can't stand being in here. I wish I was outta this place so I could see my honey bunches of oatmeal. I wanna be with her every day. I want her to keep me comfort and tell me everything is ok.

I miss you, Muñeca, and I love you. Don't trip. I'm be out this hole so I can see you. Love ya fo'eva.

-Creepster

**From The Beat:** We hope that when you get out of this place you hate so much, you'll remember what brought you here and stop doing it. That's the only way you'll get to be with your love.

## A Promise To My Grandmother

I been messing up these last months. I been gettin' in a lot of trouble. I'm happy because I may be out in two more days, but at the same time, I'm sad because I disappointed my whole family, 'specially my grandmother.

She's been telling me to do good, but I don't listen to her. But when I get out of here, I'll promise that I'll be good.

-Yader

**From The Beat:** Why do you think your grandmother has been telling you to stop doing the things that have gotten you into trouble? What do you think she wants for you? Have you made this promise to "be good" before? Why will it be different this time?

## Problems

Everyone have problems. That's what going on in this world. Now everyone have problems. That's why beefing going on now. People set trippin' over what going on at their house and the girlfriend problems.

Like I have problems myself, but I don't go around killing people for nothing. I not say I'm all good. I have problems, too. I have problems with my family, my friends, my girl and everything else. But everything is going to be all right if I keep my head up and keep moving ahead with my life. Don't let people stop me from doing what I do in life.

-Edward

**From The Beat:** We wish you had explained, with examples, some of the problems you have with family, friends and girls. It's those examples that turn a regular Beat piece into a piece of the week. If you are not going to let people stop you from doing what you do in life, what is it that you want to do in life?



## Losing Patience

Patience is very hard to have, especially since you ain't used to it. When I go to group home, I can't do it because I ain't patient to be there for a amount of long time.

But this time when I go to a group home I'ma start to do more activities to make myself busy and patient to do this program.

**-Mikeo**

**From The Beat:** Being patient can be a very difficult thing when we're doing something we don't like doing. But then we have to think about what comes next, and decide of the consequences of patience are worth it. If not, we pay the price of impatience. That's the price you're paying now.

## Counselors Make Me Lose Patience

While up in this hole, you have to have patience. But ninjas can always lose they patience, like when staff doesn't get you out your room on time and you get mad. While in this hole, a ninja can be stressing and counselors just get on your nerves. Then you loss patience for waiting.

**-Rantweez**

**From The Beat:** How do you act when you run out of patience? How do the counselors act when they run out of patience? What is the hardest thing to be patient about while you're in here? Do you ever lose patience with your roommate? Over what?

## Getting Tired

I feel like I'm running out of time

I'm so tired of this shhh

But the only thing that has changed is time

More lines, different rhymes, but

Same bullshhh-ass time

I mean starting to get tired

Things have kinda changed, I guess I'm a better liar

Man, shhh got me caught up messin' with the same supplier

Man, I'm getting tired

**-Ebonye**

**From The Beat:** We're all running out of time, so we all have the opportunity to use the time we have wisely before ours runs out. If you're truly getting tired of giving up a portion of your time (your life) to a system that doesn't care about you the way you should care about yourself, then what do you plan to do about it? Any changes coming your way?

## Losing Patience

Patience is something I don't have. If I'm ready to go and my girls ain't, I'm 'bout to find somethin' else to get into 'til they ready. But I know I should be the last one talking 'cause I take foreva and a day to get ready. But anyways, my point is I have no patience for slow people.

**-No Patience**

**From The Beat:** Since you failed to put your name down, we gave you a name... Has your impatience ever gotten you into trouble? What do you say to people who have no patience for you when you're getting ready?

## Power Without Violence

I feel that I could have power without violence if I put my mind to it like if I would get it into the books then I could have a lot more power.

If I had a super power, I would be invisible so I could go to jail just to go to the girl unit and have a lil' fun.

**-Rocket Ferson**

**From The Beat:** We combined your two pieces into one because, by themselves, neither was really long enough to publish. Next time, choose just one topic and write us a whole page about it, not just one or two sentences. If you know that there is power in books, then why haven't you "put your mind to it?"

## Getting Out And Changing

What's up with The Beat? This be Creeper saying that I might be getting out on 5/19/08. Instead of going to the negativity, I'ma be going straight to the positive.

I got me a job and I hope I can get another one working at The Beat. So what's up, Beat? Hook me up.

But yeah, like I was saying, I'm ready to get out and make a positive change in my life. For all those kids locked up, keep ya head up.

**-Creeper**

**From The Beat:** Congratulations! When you get out, come and see us. And don't forget how easy it is to slip back into old habits, and then have to face old consequences. Just keep your promise to stay positive, and you'll be fine.

## Is Violence Necessary?

Reporting live to SF County...

What's good with The Beat? Huh, Whodays and Whodettes. This the Skip ninja broadcastin' live and direct to give some knowledge to your square-ass square butts, know what I'm talkin' 'bout?

But to the subject... Most of us find ourselves where we want the three things that matter most in life: money, power, respect. But mainly, power.

A lot of people will do or use whatever's necessary to get that power. Sadly, that includes violence. But violence is not always the answer, and can lead to a lot of fatalities and casualties, and a lot of mamas and babies cryin'.

Now, I don't want to be a hypocrite because I used violence. But it wasn't for power. I have a personal power, and that is through my lyrics. I can get my power through them.

**-Lil' Skippa, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We're not sure we agree with you about the three most important things in life (we would put love ahead of all three), but we admire how you've written this. The only thing we wish is that you had given us some examples of the power you get through your lyrics. Next time.

## Super Hero

If I had super power, I wish I was invisible for when I do some thing I can be invisible. It be some hard situations out here that I don't want to be in, but it be like that sometimes. But when you going through tough times, you don't want to be there 'cause sometimes people be there at the wrong place at the wrong time.

**-Lil' Cali**

**From The Beat:** What turns this writing into a piece of the week or a co-piece is the examples and details in it. For example, you should have told us of a particular time and situation where you wish you had been invisible because you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Examples make what you write much clearer for the reader.

## Patience Is A Virtue

Patience is a virtue that I don't have

Which made my mom and fam sad

It's not like I intentionally did bad

I was mad and really needed cash

Didn't have the patience to wait for a check

Or to let a ninja try to ring my neck

So I rocketed threw his 'jets to save my life

Some say I ain't nice

But all I do is for the sake of my life

**-Jr**

**From The Beat:** Is it worth making your mom and family sad/ Just because you are an impatient lad?/ You say you did it for your life's sake/ But are you being real or are you being fake?/ Is it worth it to find yourself locked in jails/ And to socialize only with other males?

## Learning Patience

Learning patience can be hard if you're not in the right environment. While places at home and with friends you basically do what you want when you want so you don't learn patience.

When you're locked up you learn patience by sitting in your room waiting for food, or a visit, or school. The point is you're in your room more then three quarters of the day so patience is a must. When I learned to have patience I don't get mad or frustrated easily.

-Ra

**From The Beat:** It's hard to learn how to be patient, but sometimes we have to learn the hard way. This is something that you can use throughout your life, though, something that can only benefit you. Patience is a virtue and we're glad you learned it.

## Losing My Damn Patience

I am losing my patience with the court.  
I've been here for over several weeks  
they gave me five court dates already.

Every time I go to court they just give me another court date.

Next time to go to court they better let me out  
or sentence me finally.

-Cuu-Cuu

**From The Beat:** We understand that the court system can work slowly. You have to be patient 'cause after all you were the one that put yourself in this position. So be patient and it will all play out. You are not doing time for nothing because your time is being counted even though you are not sentenced, yet. So be chill 'cause now the situation is out of your hands, but that doesn't mean that you have to make it worse on yourself.

## Tired Of The Hall

I ran out of patience in staying in the hall. It's my first time in the hall and I can't take it. I 'm wasting my life when I'm in here.

How I express myself when I lose my patience in here is I usually read a book. And since I been in here I read four books. And those four books where the only four books I read just to kill time in my life.

I think my family hasn't lost patience with me because they care about me a lot and they said they'll wait for me when I get out and celebrate my belated birthday.

- Book Reader

**From The Beat:** We completely agree with you. The way you deal with your frustration is really great too. We hope you continue with that habit once you leave this place. You're lucky to have a family that is sticking by you. Let us know how your birthday celebration goes.

## Messing Up

Back then about two years ago I lived with my dad. I was doing great in school, great in football and had a great girlfriend. Then I started to mess up like hanging around with the wrong kids and started doing drugs.

My dad finally got sick of me doing these things and kicked me out. I moved back to Antioch with my mom and things just got worse, so I left my mom's house and came back to San Jose. I started off with doing drugs and robbing people.

Finally my actions finally caught up with me when I started doing more and more crimes. Now I have four felonies, stuck between four walls, a toilet bowl and a sink.

-Trl

**From The Beat:** It seems like your life just took a wrong turn. Now that your actions have caught up with you, how do you plan on getting the life you want back? Spend this time thinking, reflecting and planning. It's clear from what you wrote that you're a bright and thoughtful individual. Use it!

## Standing Tall

Baby I'm locked up behind these white walls  
I'm trying to maintain, I was taught to stand tall  
They can lock my body away but my soul will never fall

Baby I know you're locked up too  
I thank God every day because you fell in love with a foo'  
I want to say that I love you, forever you will be in my heart

Without you my love, my soul will be lost in the dark

Baby I stay strong and proud every day

'Cause you're my wife all the way

No matter what others say, they can lock us away

But we are one all the way

Baby it's just you and me

Together we are one perfect harmony

Don't you see you're the one for me

I love you forever, my angel baby

-Phuc

**From the Beat:** How wonderful that you have someone you love this much and who loves you back. We love the line, "They can lock my body away but my soul will never fall." Nothing about being locked up could be more true! Keep on writing and thinking about how you should live a free life!

*Finally my actions finally  
caught up with me when I  
started doing more and more  
crimes.*

## A Faulty Mistake

What's up Beat. Just wanna say that I'm stuck behind these walls 'cause of my own faulty mistakes, feel me Beat. And as a young man I take full responsibility of my actions, and suffer my consequences. Well Beat I'm going to go day by day with my time and I'm gone Beat. Catch you later, lates.

- Anthony

**From The Beat:** We're proud of how mature your piece is. It takes a big person to take responsibility for their actions. Learn from your mistakes and you will only become a better and better person.

## Lil' Girl

I've known

This girl for a while

Yea we've been friends

But it seems I gots this love for yeah...

And I don't know where it ends

I want to be more than friends

But I just can't explain

It's like every day I think 'bout yah

And it just don't go away

I've let you know what's up

On more than one occasion

I'll be the best you ever had

Your time I won't be wastin'

Let me know yes or no

Well lil' girl I got to go

-J@keup

**From The Beat:** Many of us can completely relate with you on this one J@keup! We've all has friends that have developed into more than friends. We hope this works out for you!

## Out Of Patience

I run out of patience in court because people talking about me like I'm a monster. Or like I'm a killer. And I am getting impatient in certain situations, like being told what to do.

**-Jo Baby**

**From The Beat:** This is really too short for The Beat, and we won't publish any more 3-sentences pieces. You could add many more details, like why they describe you as a monster in court, and why that doesn't truly describe who you are. Or, what you plan to do about your impatience. Don't be lazy. Next time write a full page!

## Checking Out The College Talk

What's good with The Beat? A ninja like me I'm chillin' expectin' the worst and hopin' the best. They talkin' 'bout sendin' a ninja to the Ranch, and I ain't feelin' it. But I just missed the wifey birthday, but I got to tell her happy birthday and shhh.

I go to court in June, so I been on my grizzly doin' good in the unit so I can get a few lettas of recommendation so I can get a better chance of goin' to the house so I can hold it down with my treal fam and my Dunny street fam. Y'all pro'ly don't know what street that is 'cause I just made it up 'cause I can't put the real name. But so far in '08, I only lost my lil' cousin.

I love my dunnies. I told all my ninjas stay coo' on the block so all my dunnies just be modulatin', and if y'all ain't willin' to tell y'all ninjas or do somethin' like that, y'all ain't true to y'all self.

But when I touchback down, I gotta go see what this lil' college talkin' 'bout with this football shhh, get a job and handle my business. I really gotta just keep myself busy or I'ma be up in county or some shhh. But I gotta be ready to do new shhh. I ain't gone keep doin' this locked up shhh. I got too many people that love me.

But, umm, I'm out. Ya heard me.

**-Cam**

**From The Beat:** We wish you'd write an entire piece that looks only at the subjects in your last paragraph. Are you looking at colleges that you might be able to attend and play football? How do you plan to keep yourself busy? What is the new "shhh" you're planning to do to stop getting locked up? Or, put another way, what's the old "shhh" you used to do that you're planning to stop?

## Shot Gun

Stay out the way of gun firing. Stay out of the streets and listen to your momma for whatever she tells you. I was not listening to my mom. She told me to go to school. I didn't go and I got shot in the leg. I was still not listening to her and I got locked up.

**-Andre**

**From The Beat:** What will it take for you to listen to someone who has a lot more experience in life than you, and who wants only the best for you? You can recover from your leg wound, and you can get out of here. But there are some consequences that last forever. Don't wait for those before you make a change.

## Controlling My Anger

One time I lost my patience is when this therapist was askin' me hella questions. I started to get mad and I lost my patience. I wanted to punch him, but I didn't want to get DRB, so I didn't do anything. Instead, I took a couple deep breaths and calmed down

**-John**

**From The Beat:** One thing this proves is that you are capable of controlling your temper when you have to. That's a skill that should serve you well when you're back on the outs. What was the therapist asking you that made you so angry?

## Brother From Another

Ey, what's up with The Beat like dawg? You know a ninja like me laid back, chillin'. In the max, ya heard.

But anyway, yo:

I show too much love fo' you ninjas to be haters  
And I ain't home all day 'cause I am getting my paper  
Plus, I know what's goin' on 'cause I am the creator  
And since I am so early, I holler at 'em later  
I sound like sex comin' through the fader  
Snitch I am the president, not the mayor  
Oh, I forgot, me and my ninja is like brothers from another

We from the same 'hood, we're blank blank... betta ask your mother

Ahhh, yeah, mayne, that's how I am  
Y'all know how I'm rockin'

If ya don't, ya betta Google me, dawg  
Naw, but check this out all my real ninjas

This time ain't shhh

Bra bras knock this out

It's just a mind thang, ya dig  
Get out and do it bigger and better

Ya feeeel me? This shhh

Just a minor to major set back

But while you in here, get cha mind right

And elevate like escalators

**-E-Boy**

**From The Beat:** There are a lot of clever rhymes in this poem, but we're not sure what they all add up to. What do you mean when you advise your friends to "get out and do it bigger and better?" If the "it" is the same as what got you here, then "bigger and better" only leads to bigger and better jails. But if you mean something different, can you spell that out for us?

## Can't Wait

What's good with you, Beat? Me, chillin', doin' time, waitin' to go home. It's just that time is going by hella slow. I'm tired of this place. Same thing, different day.

When that day comes, I'm 'bout to get juiced like crazy.

I really don't have much to say, but I'm going to write down the same stuff I always write, which is when I get out I'ma do it big, kick it with my ninjas, family, and make love to my girl all day, every day. Yup! Eat hella good 'cause this food is bullshhh.

Can't wait 'til I get to wear my own clothes, etc. So yeah, I'll write to The Beat soon. Late.

**-E.B.**

**From The Beat:** If you're going to write the stuff you always write, then we're going to reply with the same reply we always write — which is that sometimes you have to make real choices in life, 'cause if you keep going back to doing the same old things, you can expect to face the same old consequences.

## Waiting To Find Out

Man I'm losing patience like hell. I've been sittin' here for eight months... Just sitting. Not even fighting my case! Just sittin', waitin' to see if I'ma lose my 707 or not.

I ain't even gone lie. I'm not feelin' it tonight 'cause I got hella on my mind. Tomorrow my big day to find out if I'ma win or lose. But I'm out for tonight. Y'all ninjas stay mashed potato smooth, ya dig.

**-DNI**

**From The Beat:** Well, you've been waiting a long time, and we hope it turns out the way you want it to. We'd love for you to write us a piece about what it means to be an adult (or not). In other words, we're sure you want to be treated like an adult in some situations, but not in this one. What's that like? (We're keeping good thoughts for your 707.)



## Waitin'

Yeah, this Stephan livin' this maxed life out, feel me? I'm just trying to do my thing and not get stressed out or be impatient. Waitin' to get transferred.

Yeah, my little cousin got hit up, so I hope he get better soon, feel me. He gone be smooth, though. So ka-boom, knock this shhh out.

Yeah, and all in here keep your head up and do this shhh.

**-Stephan**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry about your lil' cousin, and hope that he comes out of it all right. If you feel impatient in here, what are your plans for when you get out of here so that you won't have to come back and be impatient again?

## RIP Dojah

I was gone for a while but now I'm back again  
Remeniscin' on the day when God took my friend

I try blockin' it out; it comes back again

I can't get it out; it's like it's stuck in my head

Not a day goes by that you ain't on my mind

I'll think about you every day until the end of time

I always wonder why did you have to go

It seems like just yesterday we was on the road

We used to smoke that 'dro

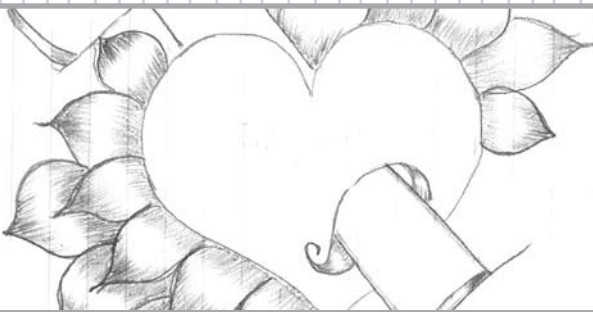
We used to chill like bros

And now I'm posted on the block thinking about my  
ninja Doj

We miss you, Doja

**-Treo L**

**From The Beat:** Another tragic memory of untimely death on these streets! You say that God took your friend, but we have to ask whether you think it's all in God's hands, or whether, by the way a person lives, he contributes to the chances he will live a long or short life. We think God's plan is for us to live into our 60s, 70s, 80s and beyond. We think it's the ungodly choices that people make that interfere with His plan. What do you think?



## I'm Bored

I can't do anything in here but sit and read! I wish Spiderman or Superman would bust me out and buy me food... Steal me a car so I can drive to Las Vegas and party my ass off. I don't give a damn what happens! Naw, just playing.

I ain't trippin' 'bout being in here 'cause I know I got someone waitin' on me while I'm in here. It's been seven months (10/07/07)! Ups and downs, but it's cool. We love each other, and that's that.

And I love my mom, too, 'cause she put up with my shhh. Mom's the best.

**-Chinese Kid**

**From The Beat:** Well, if your moms the best, why do you keep giving her shhh that she has to "put up with?" Why not start giving her what she sees when she looks at you — a mature, responsible and loving son who can accomplish whatever he sets his mind to. (Get out of here and then visit Vegas if you want, but don't wait for Spiderman or Superman to free you. That's up to you!)

## Laid Out Two

I'm in here on a bullshhhh-ass case 'Cause I laid two ninjas out. I rest my case.

Both ninjas was drunk,

Thought I was punk,

So I laid 'em out like a stanking skunk

Left them in a puddle of tears,

To drown in the shhh of fears.

Don't play, betta ask about me,

Or I'll have you on your knees.

**-Malu**

**From The Beat:** Was laying out these two drunks worth the price you're paying for it? If you had just walked away, what would you be doing right now instead of wearing the next boy's drawes and taking orders from strangers? (We had to change your last line as not appropriate for The Beat.)

## Positive Motivation

What's up, Beat? This your girl Angel. I only got 40 more days of lock-up time. Hopefully, they let me go home and not to a group home. If I go home, even when I get out, I got to keep God on my side so I won't mess up. I got to stay motivated. Just like how I was motivated to do negative things, I got to be motivated to do positive things.

My quote: Keep your head to the sky, but not in the clouds. If you do, clouds are really just water. You'll drown.

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** If you keep on God's side, then He will keep on yours. We hope you get to go home and not a group home, too, but whichever it is, it will still be up to you to stop doing those things that lead you here, to lock up. That should be all the positive motivation you need.

## Patience/Dreams

Flower, well losing patience

Is what sleeps in your mind

And the way we act and the flower choices we take

When we on the block

Doing what we do, even though people talk

What stays in our mind is whatever they say is a tool,

But makes us feel like a fool

We all in one piece,

But when we let go of our patience, we better behave

Because the system is digging our grave

I'm only a youngster following my dreams

Much love to the homies

**-Shadow**

**From The Beat:** We don't really understand this poem, Shadow. The system may be digging your grave, but you're giving them the shovel to dig with. What are your dreams, and how do you plan to achieve them?

## Losing Patience

What's good, Beat? Yeah, I dig this topic, Man.

I been sitting in this camp for a year, and it feel like hella longer than that, fo' real. I'm tired of this shhh, seeing hella of the same ninjas coming back for bullshhhh.

I be stressing like hell in my box (my room). The crazy thang is they're trying to give ya boy a lot more of them thangs, and hella ninjas hope I do get played!

Until we meet again, A.N.T.O. gone fast!

**-A.N.T.O.**

**From The Beat:** What do you mean when you write that people come here for bs? Do you mean there should be different (or no) consequences for that bs they do, or that they shouldn't be doing the bs in the first place? Are you here for bs? If you don't get played, if you things turn out the way you hope, what do you plan to do differently so you don't have to experience this again?

## Priceless

What up Beat? Well, as the days are getting hotter and summer time around the corner, I think about how I'm in here. Just reminiscing about all the good times. Chilling in the 'hood with the homeboys; all them late night barbeques; drinking nothing but the best Coronas; all them females coming through.

Yup, it sucks that I'll be locked up for this one and most probably next one too. But I ain't even trippin' because if I had a chance to go back in time, I would do it all over again.

It's priceless, and not even all the money in the world can buy this.

**-H Man**

*From The Beat: So, you really don't care about being locked up? If you'd go back and do the same all over again, you're also saying you'd expect the same consequences. So yo must like it here! Is being here what's priceless? Actually, there is a price for being here, and you're paying it.*

## Gonna Miss Ly

This goes out to my homie Ly who is leaving county tomorrow. I'm gonna miss my homie. Me and that boy had some good-ass times here, some great laughs.

I met him like eight months ago. We grew strong, just like brothers. I'll be back with him in about a month. I'll also be in county eating kim chi noodles with my boy. I'm going to miss him until I see him in a couple days.

Much love and respect. His boy,

**-Knuckles**

*From The Beat: Well, since we know where Ly is going, we're sorry that you're going to join him there. But, at the same time, we think you've chosen a very strong, very smart and very decent friend. We hope the two of you can keep each other strong and have each other's backs.*

## The Cannabis Card Plan

So, I'm going to get out of juvie and still be on probation. That means I'm going to get bottled (drug-tested) randomly. Not really tripping about the testing 'cause I'm not addicted and will pass every test.

But I'm wondering if I get my cannabis card when I get out, will I be able to indulge in smoking marijuana? Is it up to my PO? I'm going to be 18 when I get out, so technically I have the right. Right? Does any one have an answer? Help me out, Beat? Peace and chicken grease.

**-Fattie Whompus**

*From The Beat: Hmmm, Cannabis Club cards aren't just for people who like to smoke weed. They are really for people who have illnesses that cannabis can help with, like AIDS or cancer ... they help these patients eat because the THC makes people hungry. What illness do you have?*

## Going In Circles

I'm losing patience in these streets. I'm on the verge of losing my mind. Every day so much hatred in this world and hardly any love. People being raised in these streets nowadays called war zones falling knee deep in the game.

In and out the system got us going in circles. So many fellow carnales behind bars on my way to prison.

Added one more to this system that's corrupt.

Now I'm heading to the place that these streets trained us to be. No more fun and games in these prison fields where only the strong survive.

**-Knuckles**

*From The Beat: If you're going in circles, you have to find a way to step off. Even if these streets did train you for this corrupt system, it's now up to you to train yourself to move along a different path. Use the time you have, wherever you have it, to get as much knowledge under your belt as you can so that you don't have to come back to places like this.*

## Face

So now I'm walking towards the door  
I show you how I feel  
This place ain't a waste  
Pacing myself with another face  
It's prison

**-Ly**

*From The Beat: 350 years ago, the British poet Richard Lovelace wrote: "Stone walls do not a prison make,/ Nor iron bars a cage;/ Minds innocent and quiet take/ That for an hermitage;/ If I have freedom in my love,/ And in my soul am free,/ Angels along that soar above/ Enjoy such liberty." What do you think he meant?*

## For Better Or For Worse, This Life

Chilling by myself  
waiting for the good days,  
but I don't think they're coming soon.

I got savage ways.

I miss chilling in the 'hood  
with all the violence and cops,  
but tired of losing my people  
by the glocks and crack rocks.

I'm the most feared creature,  
people don't want to see me alone  
roaming the worldwide streets

this is the place that gets me so full of rage.

I got worse and worse in this concrete cage  
if this life wasn't meant for me then I'll leave it,  
but if it's for me to get worse in this life then so be it.

Alrato!

**-Young Goofy**

*From The Beat: Living this life full of violence and savage way is what can take you down for the rest of your life. Life is not a joke neither a game. Be careful when playing with fire, you might burn yourself. Whether you continue living the life you are living is your choice, but get ready to face consequences.*

## I'd Like To Fly

If I could have a super power I would have the power to fly. I would fly away to just get away from problems in life, an try to enjoy wherever I fly to, like Florida or somewhere out of the state. Just so I get away from everybody and just have time to think for myself, think about my life and what I 'bout to do with my life. Life is fast. It will be over before you know it.

**-Richard**

*From The Beat: It would be wonderful if we could just fly away from our problems, or fly to a peaceful place where we had time to think. Some people can do this in their minds. How about you?*

## I Had A Good Soul

I was really going for the right road, but every time I get on the right path, something gotta bring me back to being a bad person. I want to do good, I try, but I always seem to fail.

I hate to see things turn on me like a backstabber once they are there, smiling to your face and then next thing they're laughing behind your back. It's like they want you to do bad. I don't know.

Just please, do me yourself a favor, never trust no one, because betrayal will burn and hurt like a hot slug late.

**-Lucky**

*From The Beat: How are going to expect things to go your way if you are still messing with negative things that bring you back in here? How do we know whom to trust or not? Who do you trust? If we were you, we would trip over your situation and ignore what others do or say.*

## I'm Leaving Soon

What's up with everybody? This ya boy Yung Tone from East Palo Alto, at it again. They got your boy up in this boot security unit again.

I just got up in here last night from another unit. Is nothing though. I'm holding shhh down like dipper. I'm glad I ain't gotta put up with this for too long.

I'll be out next week from doing 15 months. I gotta keep it a-huh-nit.

Damn, I don't think I've ever written about any of The Beat topics. Have any of ya'll ever wish or thought of having any type of super power? I know I should have never thought of something like that. Now that I come to think about it, I wish I could make people forget shhh completely. Ya'll ever seen that movie Men In Black? Yeah, just like them ninjas all right, I'm up.

**-Yung Tone**

**From The Beat:** It's been a long time! How do you feel about it? What are your plans? Are you going to stay out this time or are you coming? 15 months is a long time in the system. If we were you, we would do whatever is possible to enjoy the rest of your life. One more thing, why would you want people to forget things?

## Losing Patient

What I have lost patience about is every time I go to court they try to put me into a program. I have to wait to see if I get accepted, so they make me go to court then they try to send me to another program and I have to wait to go to court again so now I have to go to court again in a couple of weeks to see if I get accepted or not.

**-Marcus**

**From The Beat:** The court process is especially slow, isn't it? How do you not lose your patience? Do other people in here have advice, since you are all going through the same process?

## What I Think About Prison

Hey what up? It's Smokey chilling in the max. I want to talk about prison. Prison is not that bad, people make it sound worse than it is.

I also wanted to say that juvenile halls has been really boring lately, I hope I get out soon and I also hope I never come back.

**-Smokey**

**From The Beat:** Yesterday we received a letter from Beat writer who was in juvenile hall and now he is in prison. Now that he is living the reality of what prison is, he has found out that things were nothing compared as he anticipated. Now it's too later for him. He's there and he has to deal with the REALITY of what prison as a lifer is. You should inform yourself better before saying something you haven't experience. Use your intelligence!!

## Females

Females are the best people in my life

If I had just one she'd be my wife

When I'm doing wrong they start snitching

That's why I keep them cleaning my kitchen

But that's why they're always complaining

I love the way they are, so smooth so cool

When I'm acting a fool

That's why I'm so cruel.

**-Legit**

**From The Beat:** It's seems like the one complaining is you. It's cool to appreciate woman. We can understand you being attracted to them, but keep in mind that you CAN'T have them all. Try not to generalize. They are not all the same. They should be treated with respect.

## Handling Business

What's up Beat, well I'm going on my last months. I finally got a interview for a placement between Visalia and Fresno.

I've been locked up to long to be messing around in here. I grew up a lot in here because I had a lot of time to think and before I came in here I really didn't care.

But I now I got to be smarter of what I do. I have nine months if I do good. So that's what I'm trying to do when I get out. I have a lot of plans but I've noticed you could never depend on no one and stay handling your own business.

**-Trey**

**From The Beat:** The handling business part is what you should always be doing. There's not that many people that you can depend on in life period. You can count on us if you need anything. But also like you said you have to handle your own because nobody is gonna do it for you. We're glad to see you mature and grow up. We hope that you can keep up the motivation and stay positive.

## Hulk

What's up Beat! Today's topic is about super hero. The super hero that I would like to be is the Hulk, because he's big and strong.

If I had his power, I would break these brick walls and get out of here. Until next time late.

**-Jr**

**From The Beat:** He is really strong! You don't need super powers to get out of here. You know the best and proper way out of here. You can have that for sure. Get busy and use your mind!

## The End

G-Vole Beat.

I feel like the end is very near.

I hope this feeling will soon disappear

because the life I live in calls it fear.

Can't even walk these halls without being clear.

If only I could hear the judge saying "released".

I know it would bring tears to my mom's eyes,  
of joy and fear.

**-Becky**

**From The Beat:** By 'the end' do you mean the end of incarceration? We hope that's what you mean. The other 'end' you can put off for eighty years, or so, with some luck and good health. Your fear will go away when you start living your life more consciously. Here's a way to start. Make up your mind to do five kind things each and every day. Something as simple as a heartfelt compliment to anyone, a staff member, another girl on the unit, someone serving you a meal in the cafeteria. Do five simple, kind things each day and you will then start being kinder to yourself. Then, your life will really start changing for the better.

## Loosing Patience

G-vole Beat? Well this is Stomper writing in this Beat again to write on this topic, about losing patience. Well there are a lot of times I can lose my patience with someone.

When I always lose my patience is when someone tries to talk down or talk hella shhh. I just lose it 'cause I know if I were talking like that, the other person would lose his patience and want to do some thing like that back.

Well anyways long story short. I hate when people talk shhh and don't think I'm not gonna do anything about it because I will!

Well I guess this is it for now, and to all keep your heads up, with much respect.

**-Stomper**

**From The Beat:** This is a big issue for you! You are letting your ego hurt you. If we were you, we would try to ignore what they say or do. Is there a way you can calm it down. If so, you should either ignore it or find a way to calm it down. Get in touch with yourself, before it becomes too late.



## Losing Patience

There are some times when I lose my patience. One of those times is when I get in a fight my mom. I just lose it and start hitting stuff like the walls and also start throwing things around until some point I just go for a walk to cool down.

Some times when I get mad with my girlfriend. When I get mad at her, I just walk away from her. Next thing, she is calling me and I don't answer her calls because that's the only way to cool down. Once I cool down, I call her back. Well that's all for now Beat.

-Jose

**From The Beat:** Maybe you should take the walk first before hitting walls and throwing things around. There are other ways to deal with anger and you know what you need to do in order to get rid of it. You just need to put it in practice before acting like a fool. No disrespect!

## I Lose Patience

Things make me lose patience  
People make me lose patience  
I make myself lose patience...  
All people don't have patience,

But I do

I smoke, I don't do drugs,

I do girls...

I don't drink,

I lose stress.

When I don't lose stress, I lose patience.

-Young Tito

**From The Beat:** How you get it back? Is by losing patience the reason you end up in here?

## Super Hero Spiderman

Spiderman is the best super hero. He shoots web, he climbs walls and he's hella strong. I would want his powers because you could pull all the girls.

-Super player

**From The Beat:** That's right! Thanks for your thoughts! Would you fight against violence and unfairness like he does too?

## What's Good?

A man what's good? This be Sergio.

Man this sucks, man it's hella bootsy. Man I'm getting tired of getting kicked out of school and shhh. Then I'm going to these weak community schools like Ridgemont, Foothill, Foundry and all these other ones man.

I ain't trying to be no bum like some of these ninjas I know asking other people for money, and other stuff 'cause they don't get they ass up and make something for they self.

I mean I don't get it. I rather go to school and go to work than be bumming off of the other broke ass ninjas who think they slang deep. The people who think they slang deep is the ones who always get caught up, now why is that? Remember every dog has its day. I'm talking some real shhh.

Then you seeing these dudes writing in The Beat about shhh that never happen. Man they remind me of a sucka.

-Sergio

**From The Beat:** The best thing you can is just worry about yourself. There's nothing wrong with giving out some friendly advice that will help some other people. But you can't sit there and trip off of them. You have to focus on you and do you only. 'Cause that's what this life is all about you. You need to focus on your program and trying to stay out of trouble.

## Flying Powers

What's up Beat! This is that g about to write about this whack topic. Well here it is. Well if I was a super hero and I could have a power, I would like to have flying powers, so I could get away from the 5-0 hella quick. Well then Beaters, late.

-G

**From The Beat:** Would you use that power for other purpose that can help others! Don't be selfish!

## Key To Love

Love is complicated.

Love is a wonderful feeling.

Love is being loyal.

Love is having trust.

The key to love is holding on,  
and to never let go.

Times can be fun,  
and times can be rough,  
don't get carried away.

Stay tough.

Love is relationship,

Love is life.

-Ju Ju

**From The Beat:** Hmmm, you are very right, love is life, but much beyond boy/girl drama ... it is really about loving yourself enough to love others.

## Power Without Violence

What's good I am Marcel, from East Palo Alto. I'm locked up hella bored and can't wait to get out.

You can better yourself by going to school, being successful in life and getting a good job. Martin L. King is a good example.

-Marcel

**From The Beat:** Thank you for your example and advice. We hope you take advantage of it as well.

## Losing Patience With The System

I feel like I'm losing patience for my PO because I keep sending requests and he never comes and sees me. I just want to ask him if it's ok to get OTs to go out and see my baby be born, that's all I want to ask him! But yeah, that's what I'm losing patience about.

- Oso

**From The Beat:** It seems like being locked up in the hall is all about losing your patience, and an M.I.A. PO can really be annoying. Why don't you try talking to the unit supervisor to help you out, or your lawyer? But keep trying and keep cool.

## I Want To Love You

-Young Goofy

**From The Beat:** Sorry Young Goofy, but we weren't able to publish your writing. Next time, we encourage you to find a different method to send your message, and next time do it on your time, not ours!

## Wishful Powers

If I had some super powers,

I'd walk their walls because I'd probably dip down to girls units or cut out during night time, and be back in the morning.

So yeah, I'll be doing my time, but still be free.

-Shabbs

**From The Beat:** Very creative! So you leave the hall with your wishful powers, yet you return in the morning and no one knows, we hope?

## Young Women Talking

Nessa: What's up sucka?  
 Cassy: Nothin, chilling  
 Nessa: Wow, hella boring. Guess what?  
 Cassy: What's up, Nes?  
 Nessa: Chicken butt. I wanna go home, Cinco-de-Mayo just passed and I bet it was hella crackin.  
 Cassy: I know man, I get out in a hundred and something days, what about you?  
 Nessa: Like two-hundred and something! Ha. It's good though. The only thing I'm tripping off of is that Ranch list, they be taking hella days to come swoop a ninja!  
 Cassy: So Nes, you know you're my girl right, well what are you gonna do when you get out the Ranch? You better do good.  
 Nessa: It took me awhile to get my head straight, but I'm actually tryna do something with myself for the better, and I want you to be there doing good with me. My lady too I love hecka much and I want the best for her.  
 Cassy: Aww I knew you loved her, well do you think that we're gonna chill? We better so we can do it, live, but in a good way, I love my lady too so I got to go.  
 Nessa: You big simp. It's up to you if you tryna chill, but I'm hella juiced, I get to call my lady tomorrow. Well you're my lil ninja, be good! LATE  
 Cassy: Aww well the staff is trippin so I got to go. Late.

-Lil' Nessa and Li'l One

From The Beat: Thanks for the "slice of life" dialogue.

## Mother's Day

What it do, Beat!?

What makes my mom special is that she still loves me even though I made a big mistake. I just hope I get out on my next court date to be home with her.

-Cuu-Cuu

From The Beat: Moms are often like that ... which is no excuse for taking them for granted. Do good and you won't have to put your mom through such a difficult time. Give her a break. Give yourself a break.

## Losing Patience In Here

What's up Beat! I am losing patience, just waiting here to go to the Ranch. I have to wait at least another two to three months to go do six to eight months. Well, it's nothing. I just got out the Ranch an am going to James this time. I might get out by next year when I am 18. Well Beat, I will have more patience when I get out. Stay up.

-Turtle Loco

From The Beat: The waiting game is especially hard, but what is patience and where does it come from? Have you ever seen those old kung fu movies where the sensai teaches the student to have patience by doing tedious things, and that helps their minds become stronger? You should see this time as that and expand yourself.

## Losing Patience:

I've lost my patience many times in my life, but today I'm not going to be talking about myself. My mom has to lose a lot of patience on me, because I've been in and out for the past three years.

This is my sixth time in J-Hall, and I think that's why my mom has lost patience in me. I know she still loves me, but right now she is just showing tough love but it's all good. I'll prove myself once I get out of this place. That's what I got to say about losing patience.

-Asian Dude

From The Beat: Yes, six times is quite a lot. We can see how your parents might start to change their ways of dealing with you. It sounds like you too may have lost a little patience with yourself.

## Mothers Day

My mom is my best friend.  
 She's always there for me every time I fall.  
 She's there to pick me up.  
 She's beautiful.  
 She's a nurse and very nice.  
 She's young and looks hella good for her age.  
 For Mothers' Day I made her some ceramic gifts, a card and a blanket.  
 The blanket isn't done but the pillow is.  
 Some times I regret everything I've done to my mom, but if I hadn't I would've learn from nothing.  
 I think as days go by she's not getting any younger so the bond we have needs to get stronger.  
 When I get out she has high hopes for me to go to San Jose State University and become a lawyer.  
 I can be argumentive at times, and I love debating.  
 Since I was young people always said that I would be a lawyer, so I'm gonna follow my dream and make my loved ones happy.  
 Well - enough now Beat. It's time to go. Peace in the middle east.

-Shantel

From The Beat: Get a jump start by reading your head off. Read everything - history, novels, essays, newspapers, poetry. And do well in school. High grades could equal a scholarship. That would make it a lot easier on your mom's purse. And when you're making the big bucks, as an attorney, you can pay her back, with vacations, and unexpected presents, and by helping out any siblings still in the nest.

## A Whack Place

What's up Beat? I'm going to write about the Ranch!  
 The Ranch is whack. It doesn't help you. You work for no money and you have to pick up horse shhh! That's not cool, but I guess that's the way life is. Well, I am going back and doing that in the hot ass sun.

Well Beat, I got to go. Hopefully I get out before the heat ends.

- Ugh, Horse Poo

From The Beat: Shoveling horse poo in the heat sounds like it would make you want to change your ways more than sitting around in the air conditioned unit in San Jose. Good luck!

## Loving My Mom

What's crackin' Beat. It's the one and only Nina, comin' at you from the honors unit.

Today I want to  
 Write about how much  
 I love my mom and how  
 Much I care for her.  
 Today my mom came  
 To see me and she  
 Was cryin' and seeing  
 Her cry made me  
 Cry too because I love her and I don't want  
 To see her like that.  
 I just wanted to  
 Tell you mom that  
 I love you with  
 All my heart and  
 That I'm goin to finish  
 My ranch program  
 For you and me because  
 I love her.

-Nina

From The Beat: What an odd shape your piece is in. We hope you do finish your program and get home again, soon. What will it take to succeed?

## This Is For Joey

It's my bro's birthday and I'm not out to see him. But the worst part is even if I was out, I still wouldn't be able to see him, since he's in a military camp. It sucks but it's better than YA. I get to write him and hopefully, he gets it. I love my brother, Beat and I miss him. This makes me think of how I'm going to change my life so this situation doesn't come up again and so I can be there for my little bro. Thanks for being there for me, Beat – peace.

- Eddie

**From The Beat:** Your welcome, Eddie. It sounds like you, your brother and your cousin should help each other be on the right track instead of contributing to each other's problems. Maybe that can be a goal when you get out.

## Loving

Q-Vole Beat. A person that I love a lot other than my man and some of my siblings is my mom. I love her to death. She's been there for me through thick and thin.

Every time I get locked up she comes and sees me even though she says she won't. In my court she always tells me she's gonna stand by me and help me stay strong while I'm doing my time.

Well, to my mom Javi, I love you and I miss you, and to all my homies, stay up and take care. Alrato.

-Becky

**From The Beat:** The more you love, the more you will be loved back.

## What It Is Beat

Well today I'm going to say Happy Mother's Day. Mom, I love you and I'm sorry I'm not home to be with you for Mothers Day, but when I get out I'm going to make it up to you. I hope you have a good day and don't try to think about me, because I don't want you to cry. Have a good time mom. I love you and miss you. See you when I get out mom. Your son, Baby Boy. Well Beat - to all the moms out there, have a good Mother's Day.

-Baby Boy

**From The Beat:** We hope your mom gets to see a copy of this issue.

## Suppose To Be Free!

We're in America, we're supposed to be free, and yes I'm locked up.

-Wilkerson

**From The Beat:** Freedom doesn't exist in a vacuum. Freedom exists in partnership with responsibility. Can't have one without the other. Is it possible that you've fallen a bit short in meeting certain responsibilities?

## Speak

I want to know why the voice I hear when I talk isn't the same voice I hear when I read or think.

- J

**From The Beat:** When we speak, unless we've memorized what we are about to say, we 'extemporize'. That means that we make it up as we go along. So, what we say to ourselves, silently, is always a bit different from what we imagine we're going to say. We're always responding to cues that we may not even be aware of. For instance, we see the beginning of a puzzled look on the face of the person we're talking to. Immediately, we begin to respond to this situation. What we might have said now becomes different words, other words, to respond to a changing situation. When we think, it's often at lightning speed. When we speak, it's always at a slower pace. This is a beginning of an answer to your very thoughtful and intelligent question. But even as it is with speaking, when one writes a response, it is subject to change, as the writing of it is in process. We might respond differently to the same question, asked at a different time. You keep thinking and reading. And asking such great questions.

## Conversation

Kassandra: Como estas?

Angela: Firme, just chilling, waiting to get out and do what I gotta do. And you?

Kassandra: Kick with my carnal when he gets out.

Angela: Me too. I'm about to be 18, with a bullet, and be off probation.

Kassandra: Firme. Are you going to stay out of problemas?

Angela: I'm gonna do the same but try to be more slick, and you?

Kassandra: Yup. Tambien y que you gonna call me o que?

Angela: Simon, because we have to go to Mike's Pizza.

Kassandra: Yup, they make so much bomb pizza there.

Angela: Serio and I hope to meet new and fine vatos.

Kassandra: I used to work at Mike's

Angela: So, you better start to work there again so you can hook it up foo.

-Kassandra and Angela

**From The Beat:** Hey, as for being slick and going back to your old ways, please leave your old ways in the past and move on!! Now save us a piece of pizza, please. Best of luck doing the right thing!!

## Time Is Flying By

What's good people? Well I'm happy because my time here is flying by fast.

Today I have 85 to go and I been here since March 12 and I got sentenced on April 11 and I got 120 days.

Last week my PO let me get a visit from my daughter Alexis. My madre brought her and that just made me happy and made time go faster, so it's all good! Well do the best stay up and to my baby's mama Alejandra and my mom, also.

-Gato Madre

**From The Beat:** It's is good to hear time is going fast for you, since most people don't feel that way. But be sure to use these dead days to think about how you are going to be there for Alexis and Alejandra when you get out.

## Hitman

Well, I think Hitman is such a sick-ass superhero because he is hella smart! The ways he kills people is sick-minded. He is really smart because he uses commonsense and thinks ten steps before he does anything. He uses his killing skills for the good of mankind, so he is not a negative superhero.

Well Beat, this is it for me! Until next time I'm gone.

- Camacho

**From The Beat:** Did you play the video game or just see the movie? What do you think of the ways that video games and movies make these assassins into heroes?

## My Brothers

What's up, Beat? Its gots to be Bugzy, back once again. But yeah, today I am going to write about my brothers. Well, first of all, I would like to tell my brothers to keep their heads up.

But anyways, Damn Beat, I got another kid on the way. It kinda sucks, you know, 'cause I wanna be there for my kids but I'm always locked up. But what can I say?

-Bugzy

**From The Beat:** Well Bugzy, it seems like you have a lot on your mind. Between your new baby and reuniting with lost loves and your seemingly inability to change the ways that got you locked up – we suggest using the time in here to really think about your life.



## Too Much Sadness

What's good Beat? Me - just nothing - still here just waiting to go to the ranch. I'll be here 6 months in a couple of days.

Other than that I'm just feeling sad today. Well, at first I was happy, then my mood switched up on me. Another reason is my boo bear is mad and I don't know why. I wish everything could be cool with us but I guess that won't happen. All I do is try then I just get rejected. I want to cry but when I cry I feel weird like that. This person doesn't understand that it affects me when they're sad or mad, then glad. I want that to stop. I want it to be happy and glad all the time. I just don't understand. I'm just throwing my feelings out there and they get thrown in my face. That's shady.

One thing I'll let you know. I'm not going to give up on boo bear and that's real talk. Well, I'm gonna leave it at that. It got me stressing like I don't know what. I'm frustrated like no other. This person doesn't understand.

The silent treatment hurts real bad. I've been given the silent treatment almost my whole life. I'm gonna just have to feel weird and small because I'm gonna cry when I go to my room. Don't get me wrong, I'm not no punk but I just got a lot going on in my mind all the time and its time to let it go.

Well I'm gonna get out of here Beat. Catch you on the flip side.

**-Sephina**

**From The Beat:** Maybe all of us would like it to "be happy and glad all the time", but that's not possible. But it should be that way some of the time, maybe even a lot of the time. If you aren't getting good returns from people, maybe you're hanging out with the wrong folks. Find friends who appreciate what you have to offer. But don't stop offering. Just find the right folks.

## A Cool Minute

Today I'm going to write about something else. Well I'm back here again and I still don't get out. I been at the ranch two times and I keep on messing up.

Well this time I came back for running and I was on the run for a cool ass time. But I'm back here again just chillin' up in here. Well this time I don't know where I'll be going. Maybe back to the ranch or I'll get APA. Man, it was a cool minute that I had been out chillin' in the hood and do my thang out there, try to stay away from the cops.

It was crackin' out there for cinco de Mayo. But there was hella cops. But I still got away. But the next day I ended up in here and here I am chillin', waiting to get sentenced.

**-Chino**

**From The Beat:** Let us ask you something Chino: what keeps you coming back? Although we love everyone's writings, we hate to see you back in here. Keep us updated on what you're up to but we hope it's from the outs, not from in here again.

## Not knowing when I'm coming out?

What up Beat. Well I've shared with you guys a couple of times we seen each other that I was going to get released on house arrest and on a program but I never did. I've been here 1 month and some days and haven't got sentenced. But I got court tomorrow and I feel good Beat about this one inside me. So hope to be home with my familia once again.

**-Homer**

**From The Beat:** We wish you the best of luck! You're ready to know where you'll be headed and we hope it's with your family. Keep us updated.

## My Thoughts

What's crackin' Beat. This is Elmo coming from this unit.

Well today I'm not really feeling your topics. So I'm just gonna come up with something. I've been hella mad lately 'cause I'm back from the ranch and now I don't even know what's gonna happen with me. I'm probably going to placement hopefully not.

I'm tired of this. I want to go back to my block and post up in Watsonville. I've also made up my mind that when I get out I'm gonna stop smoking, at least until I get off probation. I really don't care if the homeboys think that I'm scared 'cause I don't smoke. It's not gonna bother me because I'm the one who's gonna be locked up, not them, you feel me.

Well Beat I think I said it all. I can't wait to go to court, so wish me good luck. Well much respecto to all out there, stay out.

**-Elmo**

**From The Beat:** You're dead on Elmo. Make your choices based on what you want to do and what's best for you, not what others tell you to do. We wish you the best of luck and hope you get a second chance to start over. Remember what you said in this piece!

## Good News

What it do Beat. This your boy Angel, hahaha.

Anywho, so yea I got good news. I have 17 more days, until I get released. And for the bad news: after I get released, I have EMP. For 60 days. I don't wanna be on EMP. I just wanna be free, you know what I mean!!! Dang I miss my freedom. Chillin' with the homeboys from my hood. The one thing I really miss is my hyna [girlfriend] Larissa.

I feel sorry for getting locked up. But I ran out of options. I did what I had to do. So Beat! What do you think I should do. For that my hyna will forgive me. Well gots to go. Alrato.

**- Angel**

**From The Beat:** Focus on the positive Angel! You're getting out of here at least. As for advice on your girlfriend, have you tried apologizing to her? It seems to us that if she sees how you've changed, she might forgive you. Whatever reason she got upset with you for, think about what you did, why it made her angry, and what you can do to change it. She needs to hear why you did what you did and overcome her anger to be with you. Just talk to her about it!

## Power Without Violence

I'm not really to sure about power without violence because usually violence gets power faster, but you can loose it as fast as you got it.

I think that if you manage to get power without violence, it would last you longer.

**-Unknown**

**From The Beat:** Have you ever gained power without violence? Or power with violence?

## Batman!!

One of my hero's was Batman. He got the power of money, which would give me what I want when I want. Also I like him because he uses his money to help others in trouble. One way I would use Batman's power is by giving.

**-Dmu**

**From The Beat:** We're glad to see you'd be so generous with your money. Money doesn't really mean anything unless you do something with it. Who would you give your money to? Your friends and family, a charity, a school? There are so many places you could give it to. How would you choose?

## Learned A Lot

I've learned a lot from curiosity.  
Like the wind, my mind works at full velocity.  
So, if you've ever thought to cross me,  
try again, because you don't want to see him –  
him and me again.  
It's the cravi; that's genuine from the grape vine  
Like the sun, I'll shine, and a sav I'll grind.  
All night I'll strive to get mine.  
So put me in that position  
and I'm bound to dine.

-Trent

*From The Beat: We like it when your "mind works at full velocity". But don't get stuck in the traffic of revenge. Be careful around those grape vines, and better to get some sleep at night, while you're at it. We enjoy your writing, in general, and we'd appreciate it even more if you wrote more from the heart. The tough guy stuff gets tired, especially when you have the brainpower and the heart to tell us a deeper truth about yourself. We're waiting, and hoping.*

## Without Her

Without her there ain't no satisfaction.  
Memories of us cuddled up, lips laughin'.  
When midnight would strike  
I could tell it was real.  
The moon wouldn't turn to black.  
Can't change the way I feel.  
Then words were exchanged  
and feelings of regret.  
Sitting in my room with memories  
making me upset.  
How can I get to her and show my true feelings?  
Love is like layers we just started peeling.  
One thing I loved was that we could share silence  
and our arguments would end with love,  
never violence.  
But it's gone now, a thing of the past.  
How did these circumstances turn weary so fast?

- K

*From The Beat: Try sending her this poem. A good poem has been known to melt many a heart. And in the meantime, keep writing. You're getting good at this.*

## Shine

No longer have my freedom because I committed a  
crime.  
But got to let them know – the real me has to shine.  
Hope to get out to bust another rhyme.  
Hate this place but I gotta do my time.  
Telling the judge I didn't do it, but it's a lie.  
Gotta sit here and let time fly.  
Alright. Late, Beat.

-S

*From The Beat: Well, as long as you're here, try busting more rhymes for us. We like them. Try telling the truth, too. Nothing rhymes like the truth.*

## Bottom

I've hit the bottom and there's a lot going on and I don't  
know what to do. So I pray for the best and hope for the  
worst. I hope this fall ends soon.

-Wedo

*From The Beat: You've hit the bottom and you're still falling? So maybe it's the bottom that's falling, and you're holding on for the ride, as unpleasant as that may be. Our advice – let go. Sit quietly in your room and follow your breath in and out of your body. If you do that for fifteen minutes, several times a day, we can almost guarantee that you'll begin to feel better. Give it a try and then let us know how it goes.*

## Stressed

Stressed because my life is a mess.  
I'm the one to blame, but I'm never going to change.  
I stay in the streets, even when it rains.  
I take you under my wing when we creep, and vanish.  
Like smoke in the wind, we're too hard to see.  
Now I hate me, because I'm locked up in juvy.  
I was working as a janitor to put breakfast on my table.  
I give the cussing finger to my fat old boss, who fired  
me.

-Cowboy

*From The Beat: We're sorry you got fired, and we don't like it that you're hating on yourself. Time for a little forgiveness and a fresh start. There's some good writing in this piece, notwithstanding that creepy creeping business. We know you can change, if you really want to. And we hope you want to. Good writing, Cowboy. Rope some more words for us.*

*How can I get to her and  
show my true feelings?  
Love is like layers we just  
started peeling.*

## Sponge And Clay

Like a sponge I'd soak up the mystery  
of what was real – the facts of history.  
Like clay, I was hard headed, refused to learn.  
Like the hands of a clock, I could feel my mind turn.  
With a past full of grief, I'd drift away,  
a teacher to some, to others, a disease.  
Kindness is weakness, the devil would speak.  
You melted like iceberg when hit with defeat.

- K

*From The Beat: Fine writing. And also, we'd like to remind you what a famous historian said about refusing to learn from the past. He said something like: those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. We hope the poet who wrote the lines above will remember his history.*

## The Election

I don't really care at this time who wins the election  
because I can't vote right now. But if it was up to me, I  
would choose any person who would be a good president.  
By that I mean no more freaking wars – none of that stuff.  
I want a president who will be fair with everybody. Stop  
the wars and stuff like that. A FAIR PRESIDENT!

-Leo

*From The Beat: Any idea who might be that fair president you want?*

## The Election

I really don't care who gets elected for president, as long  
as this whole recession thing ends. Both Clinton and  
Obama are cool people. So both of them would be OK. So  
whatever happens happens. I just want gas prices to get  
lower and the worth of the American dollar to get higher.  
Just do it up, please.

-J

*From The Beat: Thanks for your specific observation and your thoughtful comments. Hey – any idea how we might get the dollar to be worth more?*

## Patience...

Hmm, well what I have to say is that everyone loses  
patience  
all the time.

You can't take it out on anyone except you.

There were a lot of times when I lost my patience,  
especially with my boyfriend.

Mostly, I can't blame him because it's me and things  
that I do are my decision.

I can control my patience.

What I do is take walks and think about the fun times I  
have with my daughter.

It relieves all my stress, patience, and makes me not  
worry.

So, I have a big future in front of me and I will do good,  
Think about the positive things and don't lose patience.

Just walking it off and do what's right!

**- Amber, Land Of Enchantment**

**From The Beat:** We're glad that you have a positive outlook on your life and don't want to lose patience. Keep in mind what got you in here and what you need to do to stay out. It's one thing to "talk" about what you should do and it's another to actually "act" on it.

## Lost Patience

I have lost patience with myself. I have been incarcerated  
numerous times, and every time I say that I've had enough  
and I'm gonna change but always end up going right back  
to doing the same thing that got me locked up in the first  
place.

For instance smoking and slanging both bud and  
meth, stealing, gang bangin', fighting, partying, and  
selling guns.

I would do well for awhile after getting out. I lasted  
eight months the last time. I got my G.E.D. and was  
working two jobs. Then my homie got out of jail, and we  
started kicking it and slowly but surely I fell back into the  
life.

**-Julian**

**From The Beat:** Life is all about the choices we make. It could be understandable to make a wrong choice once or twice, but numerous times? It's good you got your G.E.D and had a job, but now it's time to step up and take responsibility for your actions.

## Locked-up

Sitting here in cell six,  
Dreaming about fat-ass nicks.

Trying to leave, but this court crap isn't a breeze.

I've been screwing around,

Hanging with the wrong crowd – my life turned upside-  
down.

Need to quit running,

It's about time I stop and face what's coming.

My family is sick and tired of putting up with all my  
crap.

They tell me that I'm wasting my time,  
The clock continues to tick.

The drugs, the hustling – it doesn't mean anything.

My friends are trying to get me to do that same crap,  
They are bugging.

But they aren't the ones stuck in this cell,

And they won't post my bail.

Need to get myself out of this hell.

**- Destany**

**From The Beat:** You try to act clear about what's going on in your life. Do you think dreaming about "fat-ass nicks" is going to get you "out of this hell"? Do you think you'll go back to the friends who "won't post your bail"? We certainly hope that you aren't just blowing smoke up our ears!

## Patience (a rap)

I have a lot of patience but I'm 'bout to lose it  
I deserve to be free why I got to prove it  
If you wanna fight stop talkin' and let's do this  
You ain't no competition man I do it movin'

Someone else gone sell 'em that why not get from me

I ain't the one smokin' crack

I'm just tryin' to make some cheese

If I could chill in my pad

without worrying about the police

I wish I could get my record clean before I turn eighteen

Because I'm still young wanna have fun and live my life

Instead I'm on the run like freedom ain't even a right

They wouldn't even suspect I had a gun

if I look a lil' white

I bet they'll let the witch become president

before the black guy

But they better give me a break

if they don't then I'm escape

I don't wanna be late so just cut to the chase

'Cause I want to get first place in this paper chase

But because of this place it can never be that way

**-Da Bay Gurl**

**From The Beat:** You talk about having to prove you deserve freedom, and that if you don't get out you will escape? You must have done something to end up in detention, or you wouldn't be there. Freedom's not free, just ask our armed forces. Work to get your freedom back, and when you do, make the right choices in life to stay out of jail.

## The Fool

I have all this hate

You better step off for your sake

Or today may become an important date

Even if it ain't your fate

My patience is running low

All I gotta say is "so"

Even if you don't know

I'll do more then take your dough

'Cause you hurt me

Now I see

You're just a little boy to be

Without no plea

I let you play me like a fool

That ain't cool

I was drowned in a fake love pool

By you the fool

**-La L**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like some one you cared for really hurt you. With hate and anger like this will get you no where fast. Take a step back and look at your life, look deep and see if you like what you see. Look at all the things you are doing, and ask yourself if this is the life you want to live.

## Love's Ashes

Our love lifted me to a place beyond the stars,  
and I cannot bear to fall now that you are gone.

Could we have gone to high, to fast, too far?

Did our hearts burn too brightly for their flame to last?

As I must endure the lonely darkness of love's ashes,

I think it would have been better if we had taken flight  
without them.

**-Sjg**

**From The Beat:** Love is a painful emotion to loose. If you no longer have this love now, remember one day you will get it again. Next time go slow and savor the love you have, enjoy it and let that love grow.



## Poder Vivir Sin Violencia

Cuando me vine de mi tierra, Honduras, lo hice con intención de llegar a los Estados Unidos. Sabía que necesitaría más que valor.

En el camino de Guatemala a Mexico, me escape de que me hicieran prisionero.

Cuando vienes, hay muchas personas que te maltratan, te insultan, y te golpean si es possible. Miren al Mexicano, solo está a dos pasos, al día siguiente está aquí y al otro día lo regresan.

Ese es un lujo que no me puedo dar sin que me maten o me hechen preso. Es lindo Mexico, pero cuando sufrí al pasar sin papeles. Es muy duro los 5000 kilometros que recorri. Puedo decir que los recuerdo uno por uno.

**From The Beat:** Podemos observar atraves de tu escritura como sufristes en ese camino. Has de haber pasado por muchos momentos difíciles. ¿Pero por qué estas aqui despues de tantos esfuerzos? Mira como está la cosa. Los que viene de más lejos, son los que más tiran todo a la basura facilmente, y a los que vienen de cerca, son los que más aprovechan la oportunidad. ¿No crees que debería de ser al revez?

## Living Without Violence

When I came from my land, Honduras, I left with the intentions to come to the US. I knew I was going to need more than courage.

In the way from Guatemala to Mexico, I escaped from being capture as a prisoner.

When you come here, there are people who mistreat you, insult you, and hit you if possible. For Mexicans, it's only a few steps away, the next day; they are there and may be back the following day. Mexico is beautiful, but I suffered passing by without documents. It was hard to travel 5000 kilometers. I can say that I remember them one by one.

**Kevin, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We can observe through your writing how you suffer on that road. You must have gone through a lot of hard moments. The question is, why are you here after making a lot of efforts? Check this out. Those who come from very far are the ones who threw away the opportunities they gained with much effort; and those who come from near-by are the one who take advantage of their efforts. Shouldn't it be the other way around? What you think.

## Hoy Que No Estoy Allí

Hoy que no estoy en mi país, no puedo estar con mi familia y no puedo ver a mi madre ni al resto de mi familia. Tampoco puedo conversar con ellos. Tengo un problema bien grande y es que estoy preso y no sé cuando vaya a salir y poder comunicarme con mi madre.

Tengo la esperanza en Dios de poderme quedar en los Estados Unidos y poder ayudar a mi madre.

**From The Beat:** Lastimosamente no puedes comunicarte con ellos porque estan lejos de ti. ¿Si te llegan a dar esa oportunidad, que haras diferente?

## Today That I'm Not There

Today, That I'm not in my country, I can't be with my family and I can't even see the rest of my family. I can't also talk with all of them. I have a big problem. It is that I'm locked up, I don't know when I'm getting out, and I can't communicate with my mother.

I have the hope in God that He will let me stay in the US and be able to help my mother.

**-Carlos, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Sadly, you can't have any type of communication with them because they are very far away, but soon you'll get it. If you were given the chance you need, what would you do differently?

## Mi Madre Es La Mejor

Mi mamá es la mujer más buena y la más trabajadora. Cuando yo tenía frío, ahí estaba ella para cuidarme. Cuando me faltaba algo, ahí estaba ella. Cuando me caí, ahí estaba.

Mi mamá es una persona especial. Ella es la persona que más quiero.

**From The Beat:** ¿Y tú como eres con ella? No crees que ya es hora que tú estes por ella después de todos los sacrificios que ha hecho por ti? Es tiempo!

## My Mother Is The Best

My mother is the most nicer and hard worker woman. When I was cold, there she was to take care of me. When I fell, she was there.

My mother is a special woman. She is the woman I love the most.

**-Juan, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** How do you treat her? Don't you think it's time for you to be there for her after all she has done for you? It's time!

## Admitiendo Los Errores

Pase lo que pase tienes que admitir un error o cuando estamos equivocados. Pienso que de cualquier manera quieres salir limpio de todo el problema.

A veces confiaba más en lo que piensan que son tus amigos y al final te das cuenta que te desfraudan.

Una vez yo había usado drogas y ese día se había dado cuenta en la escuela. Se me notaba hasta de lejos y seguía negandolo, aunque ese día tuve una de las experiencias peores que pase con ecstacy.

Creo en lo que hacen las drogas. En mi manera de pensar, no tienes que llegar tan bajo. Las drogas te lleban demaciado lejos.

Yo tuve muy cerca la muerte y ahora me acuerdo de eso. Le doy gracias a un amigo que me salvo.

Sí conozco amigos que estan en drogas, pero no sé dejan ayudar. Tal vez tengan que pasar por lo que pase yo y ver la muerte para mejorar su vida.

**From The Beat:** ¿Pero que se gana con mentir, si siempre la verdad sale a luz? Nos dijistes que por nada pierdes tu vida, ten cuidado con lo que juegas. Las drogas pueden que sean divertidas, pero son muy peligrosa y dañina en todo el sentido de la palabra. ¿Y tú que tienes pensado hacer para mejorar tu vida?

## Admitting Our Mistakes

Whatever happens, you have to admit it when you commit a mistake or when we are wrong. I think you will find any way to come out clean from the problem.

Sometimes you trust those who think they're your friends; as a result, they fail you.

One time I used drugs, people from school find out. My high was noticed from far away, and I was still denying it. I had one of the worse ecstacy experiences.

I believe in what drugs do. In my opinion, you don't have to hit bottom. Drugs will take you very far.

I had death really close to me, and now I'm thinking about it. I thank a friend who saved me.

I do know people who are stuck in drugs, but they don't people to help them. Maybe they have to go through what I went through and see death really close in order to better their lives.

**-Ana, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** What can you gain from denying things if the truth always comes to light? You told us that you were almost close to loose your life. We suggest you to be careful with what you play with. Drugs may be fun, but they are also dangerous and very harmful. What do you have in mind to better your future.

## Cuando Pienso En Mi Situación

Hola me llamo Eduardo. Yo ahora les voy a contar sobre cuando pierdo la paciencia. Yo a veces la pierdo cuando estoy en mi cuarto. Me pongo a pensar en mi familia y en como la extraño.

El último día del mes es el cumpleaños de mi novia y no puedo estar con ella ni llamarle. Me puse bien enojado conmigo mismo y todas las personas con las que estaba.

Cuando me dicen, "oh vas a hacer 15 a 20 años de cárcel," me pongo triste y me desespero. Lo primero que se me viene a mente es mi novia y me tranquilizo. Si te desesperas y te sientes mal agarra la Biblia, leela y te sentiras mejor.

**From The Beat:** Ese es un buen consejo. No sabemos lo que hayas hecho, pero esperamos que tu condena sea justa y que aprendas de esta experiencia. Sólo esperamos que aprendas de tu error y que te arrepientas de lo que hayas hecho. Haz lo mejor con tu vida y trata de salir lo más pronto posible. Hay personas que al estar en prisión se vuelven peor que antes. No seas otro más en esa lista. Sigue con tu fe en Dios y que Dios te de la fuerza que necesitas para soportar lo que viene.

## When I Think About My Situation

Hi, my name is Eduardo. I'm going to share something about loosing my patience. I loose it when I am in my room. I think about my family and how much I miss them.

The last day of the month is going to be my girlfriend's birthday and I can't even call her. I got really mad with all the people that were around me and myself.

When they tell me, "oh, you are going to do 15 to 20 years in jail," makes me sad and desperate. The first thing that comes to my mind is my girl and then I get calmed. If you get desperate or feel bad, take the Bible, ready and you will feel better.

- Eduardo, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** That's a good advice. We don't know what you've done, but we hope you get a fair sentence and to learn from this experience. If you committed this mistake, we hope you learn from this; what's more important, to regret what you've done. Do the best of your life and try to get out soon. There are people who come out worse after being coming out of prison or get into more trouble in there. Don't add yourself into the list. Keep your faith in God and have God to give you the strength you need to support what's coming for you.

## Muchos Problemas

Mi vida es un desastre. Estoy preso y no tengo familia en los Estados Unidos. Mi familia está en Honduras. Porque no tengo a nadie aquí, no puedo salir.

Mi meta es salir adelante. Sólo porque estoy aquí, no me desanimo. Quiero seguir adelante. Tube muchos problemas para llegar aquí a los Estados Unidos.

Ya me he venido varias veces aquí. La primera vez estuve treinta y nueve días. En Mexico me asaltaron, en Tapachula en el 2002. En Tenoizque e agarró la migra. La segunda vez, me vine en el 2004, me agarraron.

**From The Beat:** Entonces no has aprendido la lección. ¿Por qué te metes en más problemas cuando sabes que es muy difícil venir aquí? Sólo mira las veces que has venido y lo tanto que te has sacrificado por venir a la USA? ¿Cual es tu meta? ¿Por qué tanto sacrificio para terminar aquí? Ya es hora que empieces a valorar los esfuerzos que son duro de obtener.

## A Lot Of Problems

My life is a disaster. I am locked up and I don't have my family in the US. My family is in Honduras. Because I don't have anyone here, I can't get out.

My goal is to succeed. Just because I am here, I'm not going to get sad. I want to succeed. I had a lot of problems to come to the US.

I've been here a certain number of times. The first time, I spent 39 days. I got robbed in Tapachula, Mexico in 2002. In Tenoizque, I got captured migration. The second time was in 2004 and I got caught as well.

-Javier, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** So, you haven't learned your lesson. Why do you get into so much trouble when you know how hard it is to come to the US? What's your goal? Why so much effort to end up in here? It's time you learn to value the efforts that are hard to gain.

## Sólo Creo En Dios

No, yo no escojo ningún poder de heroína porque no hay nadie en el mundo que tenga poderes. Poderes solo Dios los tiene y El se los da a quien el quiere.

Si quisiera un poder, se lo pidiera a él, que me diera el poder de buscar de El, de predicar la palabra de Dios y ganar mucha almas para us reino.

Nunca he creído en el mundo, en alguien que tenga poder, en la droga, en la heroína, super heroes solo en Dios.

**From The Beat:** Que bien que pienses así. Es tu forma de pensar y no podemos hacer nada al respecto. Esperamos que Dios te de ese poder que anhelas para poder ayudar aquellos quienes necesiten de una guía positiva.

## I Only Believe In God

No, I don't choose no power from a hero or a heroine because there isn't anyone in the world who can posses this power. Only God have the power and He decides whom to give power to.

If I want power, I would ask Him for it, and ask Him to give me the power to look for Him, to predict the Word of God, and gain a lot of souls for His kingdom.

I've never believed in the world, in someone who posses power, in drugs, heroine or heroes just in God.

-Juan, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** It's good that you think like this. This is the way you think and we respect that. We hope you give you the power you desire so you can help those who need positive guidance.

## Mi Vida En Honduras

Mi tierra es Honduras. Así como todos ustedes, yo amo a mi país. Bueno, yo en Honduras trabajaba y sali adelante para ayudarle a mi madre. Juntos salimos adelante. Así como algunos de nosotros, no tenemos padres y tenemos que ayudar a nuestra familia. Por eso hemos viajado hasta este país para ayudarles a nuestra familia.

Por eso hacemos lo que hacemos y mira donde estamos. Por eso hay que hacer lo que nos convenga y salir de aquí adelante cambiando nuestras vidas. Eso es lo mejor.

Te aconsejo que sigas adelante. Sabes que, somos Latinos y salimos adelante. No se aguiten Catrachos.

**From The Beat:** Esta bien que te preocupes por ayudar a tu familia por la gran necesidad en que siempre han estado, pero no puedes hacer lo negativo para obtener dinero. Sabemos que ser ilegal en este país se les es hace difícil encontrar trabajo, pero también sabemos que no es una cosa imposible. Si quieres ayudar a tu familia, hazlo de la forma correcta.

## My Life In Honduras

My land is Honduras. Like all of you, I love my country.

Well, in Honduras I used to work and I succeeded helping my mother out. Together we succeeded. Like some of us, we don't have parents, so we have to help our family. That's why we have come to this country to help our family.

That's why we do what we do and look at where we are. That's why we have to do what's convenience to us, and move on in life by changing our lives. That's the best. I advise you to succeed. We are Latinos and we will succeed. Don't worry Catrachos.

-Luis, San Francisco

**From The Beat:** It's OK to worry in helping your family for the necessity they've always been, but it's not OK to do negativity things to obtain money. We know what by being illegal in this country makes it hard to find jobs, but we also know that it isn't an impossible thing to do. If you want to help your family, do it the right way.

## Mis Heroes

La verdad sobre los super poderes es algo que sientes adentro de ti, un deseo de volar, y hacer lo que miras. Por ejemplo, a mí me gusta Goku, Batman, los Power Rangers y quisiera ser todos esos y lo que hacen.

Eso es como un vicio que no quieres dejar nunca. Es como si tú lo sientieras.

Cuando me pongo a mirarlos, ni me doy cuenta cuando pierdo la mente porque me dan ganas de volar, tirar fuego por las manos, y ganas de pelear. Es algo que tú no puedes aguantar. Por dentro, sientes un poder, algo que te hace brincar, alegrarte, hacer mates en la cama.

De tanto que los miras, hasta sueñas con ellos. Sueñas que tú eres el heroe, el chico bueno y que derrotas al malo.

A veces sueña como si fuera el hombre Araña y siente que andan saltando edificios por toda la ciudad, salvando a toda la humanidad de todo el peligro, de extraterrestres, y de hombres malos.

Sueño que tengo varios, que soy tan poderoso, que me pongo con cualquiera y que todos los malos me hacen las maldades, que me puedo arrastrar con mi telas de arañas. Siento como si todo el mundo fuera mío.

Lo más importante de este papel es que todo el mundo debe saber que no hay mas poderes que el de Dios.

**From The Beat:** Se nota que eres un gran fan de todos esos superhéroes. Ahora dínos, si tuvieras unos de eso super poderes harías algo para cambiar el mundo? ¿Eliminates la violencia? ¿Influenciar a los jóvenes a que se mantengan libre y enseñar lo que es bueno en esta vida

## My Heroes

The truth is that super powers is something you feel inside yourself, a desire to fly, and do what you see. For example, I like Goku, Batman, and Power Rangers. I would like to be all of them and what they do.

It's like a habit you don't want to leave ever. It's like if you can feel it.

When I watch them, I loose my mind because it makes me want to fly, throw fire through hands, and to fight. It's something you can't control. Inside, you feel a power, something that make you want to jump, get you happy, and do silly things in bed.

You watch it so much that make you dream with them. You dream you are the hero, the good guy who defeats the bad guy.

Sometimes I dream I have many super powers, I am powerful, I fight with anyone, bad guy do badness, and I can climb up with my webs. I feel like the whole world was mine.

The most important from this piece of paper is that the whole world should know that are no powers but God's power.

**-Elvin, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It's noticeable that you are a big fan from those superheroes. Now tell us, if you had super powers, what would you do to change the world? Would you eliminate violence? Drugs? Or influence young people to stay out of trouble and teach what's good in this life?

*The president is not going to come to my house to offer me a taco.*

## Mis Pensamientos De Los Temos

Yo creo que todos somos violentos solo que habemos personas más violentas que otras. Uno se acostumbra a la vida. Todas las personas sabemos que vivimos en un mundo muy violento, pero uno necesita a alguien que lo guíe, que lo saque de la violencia, que les de buenas palabra de consejos.

Creo que la paciencia se pierde cuando lo estan molestando mucho o quizas cuando uno tiene un problema y no le escuchan a uno. Uno necesita que lo escuchen.

Y mi super heroe fuerons mis padres. Ellos estan donde pudieron. Me ayudaron y ahora yo tengo que ser el heroe. Cuando estoy afuera los ayudo, pero ahora ya no puedo porque estoy encerrado. Me siento mal porque ya no les puedo ayudar.

**From The Beat:** ¿Y que tal contigo? ¿Eres violento? ¿Te falta guía o consejo o alguien quien te aconsejara? Nos gusto mucho como expresastes el último tema, de super heroes. Si consideras que tus padres te lo dieron todo, deberias de darles lo que se merecen, pero haciendo cosa que no te manden a este lugar. Hay muchas manera como puedes ayudarlos. Que lindo te exprestas de ellos. Los quieres mucho. Ahora hazlo feliz.

## My Thoughts About The Topics

I think we are all violent, but others are more violent than others. One gets used to life though. People know that we live in a violent world, but we need someone to guide us, who can take us away from violence, and to give good advice.

I think you can lose your patience when you are mad, maybe when you have a problem, and don't have someone to listen to you.

My superhero is my parents. They got to the point where they wanted. They helped me and now I have to be their hero. When I am on the outs, I help them, but now I can't because I am locked up. I feel bad because I can't help them anymore.

**-Anderson, San Francisco**

**And what about you? Are you violent? Did you have a guide or someone who can give you advice? We like the way you expressed the last paragraph, about super heroes. If you consider that your parents gave it all to you, you should give them what they deserve, but doing things that can send you to this place. There are many ways how you can help them. It was nice the way you expressed yourself about them. You love them so much. Now make them happy.**

## No Me Importa

A mí no me importa quien sea el presidente. Me tiene sin cuidado. Sino hago algo para conseguir dinero no vivo.

El presidente no va a venir a mi casa a darme un taco. No me preocupo ni del presidente de pais ahora voy a pensar en otro presidente.

**From The Beat:** Por personas como tú es que aquellos países estan llenos de presidentes corruptos. La voz y el voto de los jóvenes pueden hacer una diferencia. ¡Acuerdate de eso!

## I Don't Care

I don't care who the president is. It doesn't matter to me. If I don't do anything to get money, I can't live.

The president is not going to come to my house to offer me a taco. I don't even worry about the president from my own country and now I'm going to worry about others'.

**-Yelson, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** For people like you is the reason why other countries' presidents are corrupters. The voice and vote from young people can make a difference. Remember that!



## Cancer, My Reality

My friends, it's been two years. It's time. I have some news to share. It's a tough one for me and those who know me personally (i.e. the great writer Misha, AKA Mikhail Markhasev) will understand why. About a year ago I was having a problem with a hemorrhoid. Too much info, right? Sorry, but some things must be discussed. After a year of daily pain, the doctor sent me for a colonoscopy. The nurse wakes me after the procedure and said, "You don't have a hemorrhoid. It's a tumor and it looks like cancer."

Could I be the only one here, the one and only mistake?

And I don't mind the sound of your voice, but hate the words that you say.

It just so happens I recently came back in contact with our friends at The Beat and what better way is there to let out your feelings of fear and loneliness than through writing about it?

I thought I was alone, but Annie from The Beat pulled my name out of the ashes and reached out to me. A sign. Write about it. The fear that haunts us all is the beginning of The End. It seems it's way too cold but will we last another year? Who knows? God only. And if He grants us that year, what will we do with it?

The last couple of years I've worked hard on two things, is keeping in good condition and the other is music. We have a band here and I sing in a rock band and play bass for the R & B rap band, so I'm lucky. I am in prison, but the two things I do best, entertain and write, I get to do without limitations! I'd say that makes me FREE!

I'm scared! I got this cancer in me and sometimes I'm so alone in my head I want to cry. I'm hoping that putting the plain truth on paper to all of you will somehow give me some peace of mind. I'm cool with God. I know that He is going to welcome me to His kingdom come judgment day. What I'm scared of, though, is not being given one more day to wake up next to my girl, smiling and shining, smelling fresh as the new day, or hanging out with my dogs, Blaze and Pan. But when I write it down, I can almost see her, smell her.

I can almost see those two slobbering boxers jumping up on the bed. Another day away from home Another day to kill another world that they're blind to Another day in hell. Pray for me! Thank you for the chance to hang out with you for a while. I have a couple of issues of The Beat and I'm going to see what you are into. Take care. PS, find what makes you FREE!



Kevin McKay, writing from Corcoran State Prison, needs all our prayers and good thoughts. Our ol' friend was diagnosed with cancer recently (he shared his story with us) and feels that he's on his own, since healthcare in prison is not the best or the most personal. But throughout all the trials and challenges that life has placed on Kevin he still maintains in high spirits, and positive. His music he plays sets him free. He has a few pieces he would like to share and hopefully it can inspire some of you to really think about life. We're praying for you, Kevin. You're not alone.

## Simply For You

Part of me died today  
 You walk away  
 But I drink from life 'til I breathe  
 Part of me lives in pain  
 It's all I need  
 It lives inside my mind and feeds

And I was sent to suffer  
 For you.

They heard me cry in vain when  
 You called my name  
 Accusing eyes still search for me  
 I'm left alone and insane  
 And on my knees  
 Every heartbreak feels the same

And I was sent to suffer  
 For you.

In my mind I drift away  
 To the dawning of an age  
 A simple plan a simple mind  
 And you're still standing in line  
 And I was sent to suffer  
 For you.

*Arise and let your soul be free  
 Arise and let your heart believe*

## If Your Faith is Crumbling

If your faith is crumbling  
 Take a look in the mirror  
 Something inside, as time runs out  
 Should make you see things much clearer  
 I hope you yearn  
 To find compassion in the vilest eyes  
 I hope you learn  
 To see the lion in disguise  
 Arise and let your soul be free  
 Arise and let your heart believe  
 I hear you calling, the tears are falling  
 With love, I'm forced to scream my will at you

I see you falling  
 Into the flood of your awakening  
 And if you fade in shame  
 Look to the sky, knowing hope remains  
 Give in a way that I can feel  
 Bring the tears of a soul in pain so real  
 Arise and let your soul be free  
 Arise and let your heart believe.

## Retribution vs. Rehabilitation

In the scientific and technological fields, we have transcended the impossible. We have walked on the moon, mapped the human brain, performed open-heart surgery, vaccinated polio and small pox, and cloned a sheep named Dolly. However, when it comes to social issues, particularly what to do with those who commit crimes, we remain baffled.

How is that we can elevate our thinking to a plane that allows us to explore the depths of the ocean, carbon date a fossil that is thousands of years old, and predict the next natural disaster, yet when it comes to implementing a paradigm that will effectively curtail our overwhelming crime rate, our evolution of thought reverts back to the Paleolithic Age?

Yes, I am implying that our current approach to corrections is primitive and barbaric. Approximately 750,000 years ago, the Neanderthal was not capable of higher thought; his brain had not evolved to the point where he could make rational decisions. Consequently, his decisions were impulsive, reactive, and guided by emotions rather than intellect. Similarly to the Neanderthal, our criminal justice policy is being motivated by fear, anger, and retribution.

Every time the media flashes provocative and appalling images of a crime scene across our television sets, we cringe in fear and ask ourselves the dreaded hypothetical question: What if someone tries to harm me, or worse yet, my family? Pressure is put on Congress and they respond by passing laws. Virtually no hearings are held, no experts consulted, and no rational debate is held when they pass another set of these impulsive prison terms. Most people in society do not ask about any long-term effects of the "tough on crime bill;" they are just satisfied that their fears are temporarily extinguished and offenders will serve a lengthy prison term for their improprieties. As the result of our emotional approach to deterring crime, the U.S. prison population has swelled to a staggering 2.5 million people!

Can you believe that the United States incarcerates more of its own people per capita than any other country in the world, including countries with large prison systems, such as Russia and China? Well, it's true! Just as astonishing is how much money we spend on this growing phenomenon. We spend a staggering 40 billion a year on corrections, costs that are having a profound effect on all of us.

For nearly thirty years, "lock 'em up and throw away the key" has been our stance on crime. We have abandoned rehabilitation, legislated harsh prison sentences, even for nonviolent offenses, and made criminals second-rate citizens. Unfortunately, despite the astronomical number of criminals behind bars and the billions of dollars squandered on warehousing them, crime is still devastating our communities. How can we in good faith continue to expend so much of our economic resources on the criminal justice system and see very little return on our investment. Deterrence, retribution, and incapacitation are ineffective, cost prohibitive, and counterproductive to eradicating crime. At some point, we have to be smarter investors, not only with our finances but also with other human lives.

Please don't misconstrue what I am saying. I, too, am outraged when I turn on the local news and the anchor vividly describes how a forty-five-year old sexual deviant dragged a twelve-year-old girl into the woods and violently raped her. Instinctively, I am disgusted, livid, and want instant retribution for the little girl who was robbed of her innocence. Moreover, I want him to spend the rest of his

Christopher R. Bowers, has submitted these articles in hopes that they will make a difference in someone else's life. He is incarcerated at Western Missouri Correctional Center in Cameron, Missouri. He's a co-author of "Lost Innocence," a book designed to help other young people avoid bad choices and distorted thinking that would lead to a life in prison. You have some great ideas, Chris. Let's hope somebody who can do something will read your suggestions.

natural life behind towering prison walls that are fortified by armed guard towers where he will never be able to harm another one of our children!

Now that the aforementioned forty-five year old sex offender is safely confined behind bars, we believe the harsh conditions of prison and loss of freedom will act as a deterrent, thus preventing him from committing future crimes. Right? In our rational minds, we find it inconceivable that a person who serves fifteen to twenty years behind bars would ever jeopardize their freedom ever again. Too much would be at stake. Who would ever be so foolish?

Well, let me introduce you to Johnny. Johnny grew up in a quiet suburb in Blue Springs, Missouri, where he received the ideal American upbringing. His mother was a history teacher at the local middle school and his father worked as a self-employed psychiatrist. Early on, Johnny's parents instilled in him the importance of honesty, integrity, and hard work. Johnny was smart, gifted, and charismatic. Teachers and fellow students were enamored with him. He had an uncanny ability to relate to everyone, which helped him to win the coveted position of Senior Class President. Johnny's contagious personality wasn't his only asset either. He was a superior athlete, too. He was a two-time all-state track champion and been ranked the best high school quarterback in the Midwest. Johnny's future was filled with promise and hope. He had scholarship offers from nearly every college in the United States.

Johnny was the boy next door who was voted most likely to succeed by his classmates. However, despite his superior intellect and overwhelming popularity, he was not immune to peer-pressure. As a result, Johnny's choice of friends had not always been so wise. His best friend Danny was a troubled kid from the darker side of the tracks. Danny had experienced all the rotten breaks of life. His father was in prison and his mother barely home because she had to work two jobs to help her support her three children. With no parental guidance, Danny ran the streets searching for a place to fill in. Consequently, he was driven to the unruly cliques who abused drugs, ran with gangs, and committed crimes. Unlike Johnny's future, Danny's was bearing down on him.

Despite Danny's unruly behavior, Johnny felt obligated to his childhood friend. Johnny was the only one who really understood Danny. Though they were polar opposites, they were inseparable. Of course, their affinity was their love for football. They had played together all the way going back to Pop-Warner. Their chemistry on the football team was hypnotizing. Together they had led their high school football team to the state championships two years in a row.

One late Friday night Danny asked Johnny to go with him to heist some beer from Michael's gas station so they could celebrate their latest win on the gridiron. At first, Johnny just laughed off the juvenile proposition. However, the longer the thought tumbled in his mind, the deeper the peer pressure penetrated. When around Danny, Johnny's character always felt puny. Deep down, Johnny envied Danny's ability to live his life without restraint. Johnny had lived in such a sheltered world that he never made a choice without first debating the consequences in his head.

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However, Johnny's darker side was growing within him. He was ready to shed his innocence and prove his manhood.

As they sat in the parking lot in a drunken stupor, Johnny ran down the plan for the harmless crime. Johnny would distract the clerk by asking for instructions on how to get to the nearest town while Danny snatched up two cases of beer. Mentally prepped, they sauntered into the gas station, smelling like they had just swam in a pool of Budweiser. As they walked by the counter, the clerk's trailing eyes followed the two suspicious teens.

Danny was a wreck. His eyes looked like they were on fire, his hair pointed in every direction on earth, and he could barely stand, let alone walk. The more Johnny looked at Danny, the more the thought of being caught grew in his mind. Danny stumbled toward the cooler filled with alcohol beverages. Johnny tried to keep the clerk distracted, but his worst fear kept playing before his incredulous eyes. He could barely contain himself. As each second played out in still frames, fear flushed out the alcohol from his inebriated system, quickly sobering him up to the reality of the criminal act that was about to transpire.

Danny snatched two cases of beer and bolted for the parking lot. Johnny in disbelief stood frozen in statuesque pose. The clerk, in his mid-twenties, leapt over the counter and chased Danny into the dim-lit parking lot. Danny ran to his car, slung the car door open, and threw the cases of beer in the back seat. The vigilante clerk leapt out of the darkness and jumped onto Danny's back. Danny, stronger, broke free and tossed the clerk onto the hood of the car. Johnny ran out of the store. The clerk, not wanting anymore of Danny, got up and jumped on the back of the smaller and easier target. Not wasting any time, the clerk sunk in a rear naked choke-hold and squeezed with all his might.

Bursts of lights flickered in and out of Johnny's head as he slipped in and out of consciousness. Danny knew the consequences of being caught, but his loyalty wouldn't allow him to abandon his best friend. He jumped out of the car, slipped in behind the clerk, and with a force of a bat, smashed his forearm across the right side of his face. A stream of blood spew from the clerk's twisted body as he lie unconscious in front of the store he tried to protect.

A few sleepless nights later, Danny and Johnny were arrested, arraigned, and detained in county jail on the charges of robbery and murder in the second degree. Johnny's paid attorney convinces him that he can beat the charges because his role in the crime is minimal. Confident in his attorney's abilities, he rejects the State's offer of two concurrent five-year sentences.

Familiar with the criminal justice system, Danny knows the State's plea bargain of five years is the best offer he will get. He accepts the offer and pleads guilty to stealing and involuntary manslaughter. With good time, his attorney assures him that he could be out in two years.

After an intense and emotional filled four-day trial, a jury, who didn't quite comprehend the complex statutory definitions of a lesser-included offense, finds Johnny guilty of second degree murder and second-degree robbery. Everyone involved is disheartened, including the prosecutor. The trial judge is frustrated at the jury's lack of understanding of the law. However, as the judicial officer, he must set aside his personal opinion and follow the letter of the law. Bound by strict sentencing guidelines, he reluctantly sentences Johnny to a twelve year term of imprisonment.

Unfortunately for Johnny, due to the "tough on crime" stampede, Congress passed a series of "truth-in-sentencing" bills which require violent offenders to serve the majority

of their sentences. Since second degree murder is classified as a violent offense, Johnny will have to serve a minimum mandatory sentence of ten years before even becoming eligible for parole. Because of the length of his sentence and the State's ability to receive more funding, Johnny is classified as a dangerous offender and shipped to a level five maximum-security prison. Despite this being Johnny's first incarceration and only being eighteen, he is dumped in the oldest and most violent prison in the state, known to its denizens as the "bloodiest 47 acres in the United States." Unlike Johnny, the majority of the cons at the "walls" are serving life sentences for unspeakable crimes.

As the "Gray Goose" (bus) passes through the "gates of hell," he wonders how he, a suburbanite, with no battleground experience, will survive amongst the coliseum of gladiators. Later that day, after orientation, Johnny is issued a bedroll, three sets of state issue clothes, and is assigned a cell on the third tier in A-Block. As he enters through the steel door of his new housing unit, steps into his new cell house, a band of "booty bandits" is hanging out at the bottom of the stairs, looking for their next victim.

Smelling fear, the cold, vicious pack of predators trail Johnny to his cell. Oblivious to the ominous crowd, Johnny opens the door and steps into his new steel abode. Five shadows sweep in behind him and force him onto the suspended bed. For the 1,800 seconds, he is held at knife point while five muscle bound monsters brutally rape him. When they finish, Johnny is bruised, bloody, and broken.

Inmates adhering to the criminal code turned up their radios to drown out Johnny's screams. The two correctional officers that guarded the unit were too busy playing the freaks with a group of sycophants to notice that a rape was happening within their unit. Johnny was stranded alone in a cruel world that devoured the weak. With nowhere to run, he succumbs to the inevitable and becomes a penitentiary punk. For the next few years, he is forced against his will to perform unspeakable sexual acts.

Johnny's psychological prison becomes much more darker and treacherous than the physical one his body occupies. In order to escape his mental cage, he plunges syringes of heroin into his arms. Consequently, his body becomes addicted to the narcotic that makes his cruel and tragic world fade away. Over the nightmarish years, Johnny makes several attempts at suicide, receives numerous institutionally conduct violations for the use of intoxicating substances, and spends most of his time being caged in the hole for disciplinary infractions. The concrete jungle and its unruly beasts have consumed him and all that remains is a shell of a man.

In the last nine years, his grandma, grandpa, and his favorite uncles have passed away. The collateral consequences of having a loved one caged behind bars is too demanding and the proverbial out of sight, out of mind becomes the rest of his family's unconscious stance. Buried alone, he has no impetus to regain his freedom. Years of adversity have hardened him. He is use to disappointment, sorrow, and mind-numbing loneliness. Being scolded, patronized, and debased by prison staff has become part of his daily prison routine. Johnny has grown cold from the emotional storms of frustration, bitterness, and resentments, eroding any hope for the old Johnny to return.

Eventually, he is transferred to a medium-security prison where only a few cons know his lurid past. He is no longer petrified of the unknown or intimidated by the threat of violence; he has embraced the abnormalities of prison

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life. Johnny has conformed to the overwhelming rules of the concrete jungle and is now ready to claim a section of the prison yard for himself. He has decided that he is no longer going to be passed around like an unwanted relative, he is no longer going to hold onto anyone else's shank or drugs, and definitely is no longer going to be anyone else's penitentiary punk.

Johnny goes from being the "prey" to being the "predator." He spends his days lurking outside "fishrow" (housing unit for newcomers), stalking his next victim. Johnny now believes that power and control is the answer to restore his manhood. Consequently, young white vulnerable kids become ensnared in Johnny's web of violent sexual assaults.

Any semblance of compassion, understanding, and love has been swallowed up by fear, intimidation, anger, and violence. Johnny has been taught that the two most deadliest weapons in prison are fear and anger. He knows that every time he brandishes his razor sharp sword coated in anger and fear, intimidation slices through the minds of his victims. He knows firsthand that the psychological act of being brutally stabbed is a million times more lethal than the actual physical act. The atrocities he's seen and been subject to has left him numb.

After serving a decade in the bowels of prison, he appears before the Board for consideration of parole. The Chairman conducts a five-minute hearing covering the standard set of questions; "Tell me about your crime." "What do you plan on doing if you are released?" "Why didn't you take programs?" During the hearing, Johnny expresses no remorse, offers no explanation for his behavior while in prison, and presents no realistic future plans. A cursory review of his institutional file reveals that he has had over a hundred institutional infractions, ranging from sexual misconduct, possession of controlled substances, and numerous assaults with a deadly instrument.

Approximately four weeks later, Johnny receives his parole answer via the institutional mail. His notice of action states: "You have been scheduled for immediate release." After serving nearly eleven years in prison, he is cast back into society with no high school diploma, no marketable skills, and no psychiatric counseling. He has no money, no clothes, and no place to stay. His family has turned their backs on him after years of manipulation and abuse. He had swindled thousands and thousands of dollars from them for dope and they no longer want anything to do with the man prison has bred. His only means of shelter becomes a cot at the local Salvation Army.

In prison, Johnny was feared, respected, and penitentiary-rich. However, he is quickly learning that the behavior rewarded in prison is shunned in society. He is baffled and doesn't know how to make the transition from prisoner to citizen. Society operates on an entirely different set of rules and principles and morals taught to him as a youth were smothered by the overwhelming negativity of prison life. Being a con is all he knows.

During the course of his lengthy stay in prison, he has met a throng of criminals. It just so happens that several of them live in the area where he was dumped. After tracking them down, he asks them for a little financial help. Just like Johnny, they had been spewed out into society with no assistance. However, they have learned how to cope in their new but strange environment. Criminal tactics worked for them in the past, so they returned to what works best for them—Crime.

Johnny's penitentiary associates are eager to help a fellow con. As a sign of respect, they front him a few ounces

until he can get on his feet. However, like most dope fiends, he terribly fails in his attempt to sell the drugs for profit. Instead of selling the dope, he ends up abusing it. Several blurred and sleepless days later, he begins breaking into houses to finance his new "meth habit."

Johnny's addiction has grown so out of control that his mind and body won't allow him to rest until he gets his next hit. He stops reporting to his parole officer and goes on the run. Six weeks after he was released from prison he is re-arrested and taken before a judge. His short stay in society is over. During one of the many burglaries he committed, a forty year old mother of two came home, startling Johnny. Tragically, Johnny panicked and blew the mother away.

In Johnny's case, did deterrence or incapacitation work? I don't believe so. We sent Johnny to "gladiator school," a place where he was trained by robbers, rapists, and murderers to be the worst of the worst. How could the seventeen year old impressionable kid not grow worse? He should have never been sent to an adult prison in the first place. Moreover, we should have sent him to a place where he could have learned from his past mistakes and become a better person.

In our attempt to deter crime, we actually spawned a monster. How can we expect to punish an offender for his or her crime, then send them to a place that promotes criminality, substance abuse, exploitation, and violence? What are the lessons we are trying to teach? A pundit of punishment might argue that at least we were protected from Johnny for a decade. I don't believe this is the case. I believe that in our attempt to deter crime, we created a man capable to even greater crimes, thus making even more victims.

It is evident that from Johnny's case and the many more like his, our system of punishment does not work, it's unjust, and is respected by few; not by the citizen, not by the victim, and not by the offender. For some offenders it does not punish, for most it does not deter, and for certain it does not rehabilitate.

The institutions that were initially designed to bring about redemption and reform have collapsed into retributive warehouses. Mindlessly, we dump these breathing corpses into concrete and steel coffins, bury them in lengthy sentences, and abandon them to rot. Entombed, the decomposing nameless corpses are hollowed by the parasites of condemnation, solitude, and banishment. Years later, after a capricious and arbitrary decision, the Board resurrects the prisoner from their concrete cemetery and casts him or her back into a society they are no longer familiar with.

The public views the prison, no matter how horrible, as the pain that an offender must suffer. However, prisoners are sent to prison as punishment for their crime(s) not for punishment. Once an offender is incarcerated, our method should shift from retribution to rehabilitation.

We must contain offenders, correct them if possible, and if they are released, it must be to some form of productive endeavor, and to some rational hope for success. We do not want ex-prisoners or criminals to be released. We want productive and law-abiding citizens to be re-enculturated. For the greater good of society, let's stop flushing prisoners into septic social systems that are filled with rage, violence, and apathy. Let's set aside our indifference, abandon our punitive precepts, and implement modalities that are consistent with rehabilitation. So where do we start? How about we begin with the obvious.

Nearly ninety percent of offenders incarcerated were either high when they committed their crime or were

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committing their crime to get high. In attempt to diminish this epidemic, legislators have passed absurd mandatory sentences for drug related offenses. Often these draconian sentences carry the same range of punishment as violent crimes, such as robbery, rape, and murder. This form of punishment is barbaric, inept, and socially damaging.

It is illogical to think that we can use harsh prison sentences to deter people from abusing drugs and alcohol. For decades we have tried this approach and been terribly unsuccessful. Addiction is a cunning, baffling, and powerful disease that cannot be treated with crude depravation tactics. In order to treat addiction, we must understand that drug and alcohol abuse is a symptom of a deeper psychological crisis. Drugs and alcohol are not the sole problem, rather it is feelings of inadequacy, guilt, sorrow, anger, shame, and a host of other toxic emotions that stem from environmental stresses, such as mental, physical, and sexual abuse. To cope with their crucifying pain, addicts medicate their pain with mind-altering chemicals.

If we want to end the perpetual cycle of crime and addiction, we must address the impetuses that cause substance abuse and antisocial behavior. Furthermore, if we want a true and sincere conversion, we must provide addicts and criminals with extensive counseling, cognitive restructuring, behavioral modification, and situational techniques. We must provide safe environments where prisoners can feel safe to meticulously excavate the ancestry of their fears, resentments, inadequacies, shame, and anger. We must teach them how to cope with stress and emotions and arm them with tools that will enable them to live on life terms. Then it is the responsibility of the prisoners to reconcile with their past and forgive their trespassers, including themselves.

To be truly effective in our attempt to rehabilitate, we must implement a treatment modality that begins the minute the prisoner is received by the diagnostic and reception center. I suggest the following: Every prisoner entering the Department of Corrections should immediately be seen by a trained professional counselor. Together, the prisoner and counselor would review the prisoner's crime report, details surrounding the offense, age of commitment, social and economic background, substance abuse, education, and observations of behavior and offer suggestions for correction.

After thoroughly examining the prisoner's case file, the counselor would prepare a detailed report that would outline recommendations for rehabilitation., the prisoner would have to complete all mandated programs, e.g. if the prisoner had a history of substance abuse, he or she would be required to undergo extensive drug counseling. (There must be a range of programs available for the counselor to choose from, such as victim impact, therapeutic community, substance abuse counseling, A.A., N.A. Breaking Barriers, Transactional Analysis, Youth Services, Self-esteem, Criminality, Addictive Thinking, Life Skills, Successful Relationships, Long-distance Dads, Wounded Boys, Victim Mediation, Cage Your Rage, Alternatives to Violence, etc.)

Along with the cognitive and behavioral classes, college classes and vocational training should be provided in every institution. A prisoner's odds of not re-offending increases exponentially when they enter back into society with a marketable skill. Every ninety days the counselor shall meet with the prisoner to ensure that he or she is making therapeutic progress. Correctional officers, case workers, supervisors, volunteers, and other relevant institutional personnel should periodically submit reports on the

prisoner's attitude and institutional adjustment.

Prison life should mirror society as much as possible without infringing upon the safety and security of the prison. Prisoners should be rewarded for exemplary behavior and punished for unacceptable behavior. Every prisoner should be required to perform restorative justice, giving back to the community from which they took. Every able-bodied prisoner should be required to provide a full and meaningful day of labor and be rewarded for their productivity. The prisoner's labor should be directed to helping the prison become self-sufficient, thus saving the state money.

To ensure compliance, the Department of Corrections should operate on a point system, which would determine the prisoner's release date. Prisoners who complete self-help programs, college classes, vocational training, employment, counseling, and restorative justice and display exemplary behavior would be rewarded points. Prisoners who receive disciplinary infractions, refuse to participate in self-help programs and counseling and display an overall lack of therapeutic gain would lose points, thus extending their stay in prison. Under the point system, every prisoner would be directly in control of their fate. Prisoners who refuse to comply should be housed in a prison with others who hold the same mentality, thus eradicating the incorrigibles from the corrigibles.

Once the prisoner received an out-date, they should be transferred to a prison that offers work-release, family integration, and furloughs, thus giving the prisoner an opportunity to slowly reintegrate into society. Upon release back into society, prisoners should be linked to sponsors who would help the prisoner to obtain his or her driver's license, find employment, transportation, and housing.

Annually, parole officers should escort parolees back to the prison from which they were released. Once inside, the parolee would meet with prisoners to share his or her strengths, hopes, and experiences. This vital program would serve two purposes: encourage prisoners that they can successfully reintegrate into society and remind the parolee where he or she came from.

All parolees should be mandated to participate in volunteer programs such as Y.M.C.A., Salvation Army, A.A., N.A., Habitat for Humanity, and other programs that give back to the community. Being linked to such programs would offer the parolee a sense of meaning, thus decreasing the likelihood of recidivism.

We can no longer simply dump the offender back into society after years of incarceration. By doing so, we have built almost-certain failure into the system. When we release an individual, unimproved by his prison exposure, often into the environment from whence he came, with limited financial resources and impaired social skills, it will be a rare bird indeed who does not return to what he knows best, the criminal culture and crime, to support himself psychologically, financially, and socially. All we can hope for then is that he will be re-arrested, re-convicted, and re-incarcerated, all at great human and economic cost to our culture.

Too many lives are at jeopardy to not rehabilitate the segment of citizens that could continue to do something about our criminal justice system. It's time that we apply our human genius to the field of social sciences. If we can map the human brain, clone sheep, and invent weapons of mass destruction, then surely we can implement a rehabilitation model that will restore the sanity of society.

## Beyond the Tears

Last night during my deepest and darkest hour of despair, I screamed, pleaded, and begged God to demolish the towering wall of torment and suffering that imprisons my mind, body, and soul. In my carnal thinking, I could not comprehend why God would not answer my vociferous prayers. My thoughts were permeated with shadows of doubt, yet in my heart I had conflicting feelings. I followed the innate instructions of my heart and diligently searched the blue and white clear sky that extended hundreds of miles beyond my sight. My strained eyes watered from the hours of searching for the city whose streets are paved of pure gold and whose walls are constructed of Jasper, Emerald, and Sapphire.

In my exploration I didn't discover a throng of angelic beings walking on the transparent paved streets of gold; instead my incredulous dark blue eyes discovered an overflowing ocean of human tears. My broken body clung to the rock embankment as I peered over the 100 ft. cliff into the murky ocean where millions of tears had been dumped by lonely grief stricken humans.

A strong east wind blew across my pale face and emaciated body as I fearfully watched 40 ft. waves of my life rise to a crest and then violently crash into the expansive ocean, creating a ripple effect to form across the body of water. The remaining daylight dissolved and now pitch-black darkness covered the Earth for what seemed like an eternity. As the darkest eve of the night approached, a deafening rumble of thunder exploded from the heavens and lightning bolts flashed across the dark sky.

Seconds later a torrential down pouring of rain and hail marched upon my haggard face as my tears were lost in the storm. Paralyzed in this state of fear and sorrow, I languished on the 100 ft. cliff and rocky embankment dejected. My hollow eyes and heavy eyelids began to collapse as my spirit abandoned all

hope.

As I surrendered and drifted away, I heard a distant song of hope emanating from the hundreds of multicolored parakeets soaring across the sky. I slowly opened my eyes and marveled at the shards of light as they obliterated the darkness. Beyond the 100 ft. embankment and human waste tears, a beautiful landscape emerged as sunlight radiated from the morning sunrise. A few feet away a family of Asian elephants and two small lion cubs wrestled and played in the bright green foliage. Thousands of rainbow colored butterflies emerged from their deprecating cocoons and soared into the open air of the clear blue sky.

My clairvoyant eyes drifted out upon the endless sea of tears and saw written words formed from the shadows of the human shed tears. Thousands and thousands of words spawned from the most ultimate human suffering man and woman has ever known floated to the ocean's surface. ABANDONMENT, DIVORCE, IMPRISONMENT, FAILURE, SHAME, and REMORSE were just a few of the words that I could decipher among the vast cesspool of human carnage.

I trembled and collapsed to my knees as I watched the words that imprisoned my mind, body, and soul evaporate under the scorching heat of the Son. My heart and soul began to restore as I serenaded the liberated parakeets' song of freedom. I had emerged and destroyed the prison bars that kept me captive.

I smiled and chuckled as I realized that my prayers had been answered after all. My prayers asked God to deliver me from my incomprehensible adversity, instead I received the strength to face and transcend my human suffering like the proverbial phoenix. God answers each and every prayer request in two different fashions. Either He grants your request or He gives you the divine strength to endure and overcome your circumstances.

## Dear The Beat

Greetings, I want to introduce myself to all of the faithful readers of The Beat, I go by "Gonzo" cause it's short for my first name. I'm another statistic, what you would call a number, cause after all that is all we are, however I refuse to be part of the statistic that society has made me out to be. Yes, I am a Hispanic raised by a single mother, in poverty, and have always been a minority. Yes I looked up to the older homies in the hood as a father figure and later joined the gang. But what I am not, it another Hispanic male who will never amount to be anything. My story ain't any different than anyone else's. Truth be told, I've lived a hard life and I know many of your readers can relate.

Life is tough, but we seem to make it even tougher by the choices we make.

I've come to accept the fact that life is like a roller coaster ride, it has its ups and downs, it's fun one minute and scary as hell the next, and of course it also has its unexpected twists and turns. I've read a lot of the literature written by some of your youth and my heart goes out to them. I know some desire a change in their lives and others are caught up in the street scene.

I mentioned that we are statistics earlier. Society has calculated how we will end up in jail cells time and time again. They've figured out how many individuals will be laid in a grave at a very young age cause of the lifestyle they choose to live, teen pregnancy's, abortions, homeless and the list goes on. Very few people represent the numbers of those who will break the chains of bondage and succeed in life. Many people have given up on us cause they are convinced by the numbers/, the statistics, that we will never become productive members in our communities and society.

I want to give a special thanks to the Beat for allowing individuals confined within four brick walls to express themselves in ways that they may perhaps not be used to, or were never given to opportunity to. I appreciate the support, advice and kind words you give our subscribers. I truly believe that your feedback is meant in a positive way, even if at times it may seem a little dole, keeping it real though everyone needs a little tough love every now and then.

Thanks also to all of the sponsors and supporters who make The Beat possible, and a special thanks to the readers and writes of The Beat, cause at the end of every issue, and that is the fact that it's all about YOU!

Heads up and down when you pray.  
 With much love and respect!

## •GONZO•

Our next writer is writing to us from a Correctional Facility in Callum Bay, Wa. Gonzo is a recently new writer to The Beat Within. He really respects the work that we do and in return we respect the message he's trying to convey for all the young people out there. Everybody has had hard life growing up, no matter what race, set or city we're from. We all have our own story to tell. So does Gonzo as he tells his story for all you readers out there with a very powerful message. So all you readers out there give Gonzo a read, as he delivers nothing but the honest truth.

## Chance

Living a life of pride, and struggling to survive,  
 Crime doesn't pay, man that's a lie  
 You reap what you sow, bro that's fo' sure  
 I learned the hard way, locked behind closed doors  
 In little jail cells, all by myself  
 It's the price I paid, for striving for wealth  
 Never once was it fun spending time alone  
 My mama always cried when I didn't come home  
 On her knees she prayed, that I'd change my ways  
 The life that I was living I was digging my own grave  
 I was too blind to see, my failures and mistakes  
 I didn't realize that I was driving in stakes  
 In both hands and feet, the price that was paid for me  
 Even though I was blind, I came to believe  
 In everlasting life, a place in paradise  
 I took a chance with my life and I rolled the dice  
 And now I look forward, to meeting this Christ  
 When we come face to face on that judgment day  
 I can only imagine what will be like that day  
 Everlasting praise in the heavens above  
 Blessed with his grace and filled with his love  
 The everlasting love that he has for you and me  
 All you've got to do my brothers, is come to believe  
 Confess your sins to him while on bent knees  
 I beg you this my brothers, please do it for me.



## The Joy of Unknowing

My strength is to know my weakness, and to learn to live with my limitations. There is much that I don't know, and much that I'm ignorant of. Over a decade in prison, my entire adult life, has erected a thick wall between me and the actual reality of the free world. It helps me to remember that when I'm tempted to substitute "what is" for "what I think it is". For instance, when one of my coworkers tries to engage me on political topics, foreign affairs, social issues, and whatever else happens under the sun, I try to do more listening than speaking, and hope to remember that I don't have a good grasp or understanding about what is outside of my immediate experience.

There is no shame in saying, "I don't know", or confessing my ignorance. What is regrettable is when my pride gets the best of me, and I try to pass my ignorance off as knowledge. In the words of Ecclesiastes, "See this is what I found, that God made human beings straightforward, but they have devised many schemes."

The beginning of all my troubles was my self-assurance. I thought I knew what I was doing and where I was headed. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, right? Well, I was more than halfway there before I saw my foolishness for what it was, and with God's help made a U-turn.

The same thing continues with me today, although on a lesser scale. For instance, I'm tempted to argue and debate issues as though I know what I'm talking about, showcasing my opinion. I'll want to discuss the War in Iraq, while failing to heed the war in my own heart, and the war in the souls of those around me. Afterwards, I'll think, "What am I doing? I'm a non-citizen, a convicted felon, am not a voter, and have not made any positive contributions to this country. I've failed to govern my own life, so am I now going to dictate American foreign policy or criticize the decisions of others?". I speak as a prisoner, as a lifer, realizing that all of my rhetoric is nothing more a puffing up of my pride, and is counterproductive to my growth as a Christian.

Instead of dealing with my issues, and facing my own mistakes, I have the nerve to point the finger at the Government, and tell others how they ought to do their job. This is stupid. It wasn't the Government that brought me to

Our next writer the infamous MM is writing to us from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, California. Mikhail has been a very inspirational writer for The Beat Within for a long time now. He doesn't fail to miss an issue as he frequently delivers powerful words of wisdom through his pieces. In the upcoming piece Mikhail doesn't fail to mention the truth and the bottom line to life. Everyone wants to talk about politics, the war in Iraq, and how the government is all messed up, but nobody takes a look at them selves in the mirror and doesn't recognize their own flaws. Enough explanation from us, just relax and indulge yourself with some real talk from one of our most respected Beat writers, Mikhail Markhasev.

prison, but my own choices.

I know that we live in a society with many serious issues. And I know that there is a general perception that we need to be "cuddled" from cradle to the grave, that someone owes us a free lunch, and that when we fail it's because someone, somewhere, somehow failed to do their part in preventing our failure. It's more complicated, but this isn't a new thought. It's the basic fact of living in a fallen world, where our perception is warped just-enough for us to see everyone else's mistakes, while conveniently avoiding our own.

I do it all the time, and when it hits home, I'm like a dog that attacks the rock thrown at it by someone else-while neglecting the actual source, the person who threw the stone. I wish things would be simpler, and we'd have a perfect, neat answer for all of the world's problems. I wish people would just beat their swords into plowshares, would hold hands the way the do in the movies, and everyone would be right. Parents would be great parents, children- - wonderful children, and governments would resemble the "Federation of Planets" of Star Trek, a utopian dream where we magically outside today, walked through downtown or opened up a newspaper.

It's clear that we face situations and problems which often defy logic, reason and common sense. In fact, I often act contrary to logic- -again- - thinking that I know what I'm doing. There are no easy solutions in a difficult world, but the easiest starting point is asking God for help to work on myself, so that I don't become what I myself condemn. At the end of the road of life, that's the biggest issue I need to concern myself with: becoming what I ought to be before the Lord, and be a part of the solution, not the problem.

## DARKSIDE

### DESTINY

Time is counting now  
Young kids get shot down  
Now they chest burning from them hot rounds  
Police scared to come around  
They might get lost and not found  
So in the ghetto our souls drown  
Look at how the world molds babies now  
And hate is what our hearts hold now  
Wonder why we cold now  
Eyes full of coal now  
I'm tired of bullets but I'm ready to pull it  
I live in the city of dreams  
But that's just the cover, it's really the city of schemes  
Where money makes you do crazy things  
Where ninjas'll kill for the bling  
All because they fiends  
Where they pop pills and let them choppas sing  
I'm so tired of struggling  
Let's do a robbery is what them demons be telling me  
But I shine light on my DARK-SIDE

The very talented writer of this sad poem, Darkside, is not new to The Beat. But unlike the sad POW poems he wrote while at San Francisco's Log Cabin Ranch, he is now writing at a computer in The Beat office. So join us in welcoming back Darkside's powerful poetry, and pray that he is able to turn a painful past into a brighter future.

I know he mad 'cause I got a job  
So in my mind he makes me think I got to rob  
His poison is strong in my veins  
But being in jail is stronger than his pain  
When my homie died,  
I learned that gang-banging is only a game  
I live in a world full of opportunity but chances are slim  
because of my color  
Wandering the streets was me, a boy with no mother  
A world where drugs was my big brother  
And where thugs don't associate with others  
Gotta teach myself how to be a lover  
Tryin' to dodge the devil but he slicker than butter  
But maybe I can be quicker than the others  
I am not like the others; it's something that's inside me  
Something that was meant to be  
Shhh! This is destiny.

## Chance

Living a life of pride, and struggling to survive,  
 Crime doesn't pay, man that's a lie  
 You reap what you sow, bro that's fo' sure  
 I learned the hard way, locked behind closed doors  
 In little jail cells, all by myself  
 It's the price I paid, for striving for wealth  
 Never once was it fun spending time alone  
 My mama always cried when I didn't come home  
 On her knees she prayed, that I'd change my ways  
 The life that I was living I was digging my own grave  
 I was too blind to see, my failures and mistakes  
 I didn't realize that I was driving in stakes  
 In both hands and feet, the price that was paid for me  
 Even though I was blind, I came to believe  
 In everlasting life, a place in paradise  
 I took a chance with my life and I rolled the dice  
 And now I look forward, to meeting this Christ  
 When we come face to face on that judgment day  
 I can only imagine what will be like that day  
 Everlasting praise in the heavens above  
 Blessed with his grace and filled with his love  
 The everlasting love that he has for you and me  
 All you've got to do my brothers, is come to believe  
 Confess your sins to him while on bent knees  
 I beg you this my brothers, please do it for me.

Our next writer is new to The Beat Within and was introduced by our good friend Lester. Mr. Lonesome is also writing to us from Columbia Correctional Institution in Raiford, Fla. Mr. Lonesome is writing with sole intentions on pouring his heart and soul for everyone to hear him out. So without further or do we're gonna let Mr. Lonesome introduce himself.

## Dear The Beat

Greetings, I want to introduce myself to all of the faithful readers of The Beat, I go by "Gonzo" cause it's short for my first name. I'm another statistic, what you would call a number, cause after all that is all we are, however I refuse to be part of the statistic that society has made me out to be. Yes, I am a Hispanic raised by a single mother, in poverty, and have always been a minority. Yes I looked up to the older homies in the hood as a father figure and later joined the gang. But what I am not, it another Hispanic male who will never amount to be anything. My story ain't any different than anyone else's. Truth be told, I've lived a hard life and I know many of your readers can relate.

Life is tough, but we seem to make it even tougher by the choices we make.

I've come to accept the fact that life is like a roller coaster ride, it has its ups and downs, it's fun one minute and scary as hell the next, and of course it also has its unexpected twists and turns. I've read a lot of the literature written by some of your youth and my heart goes out to them. I know some desire a change in their lives and others are caught up in the street scene.

I mentioned that we are statistics earlier. Society has calculated how we will end up in jail cells time and time again. They've figured out how many individuals will be laid in a grave at a very young age cause of the lifestyle they choose to live, teen pregnancy's, abortions, homeless and the list goes on. Very few people represent the numbers of those who will break the chains of bondage and succeed in life. Many people have given up on us cause they are convinced by the numbers/, the statistics, that we will never become productive members in our communities and society.

I want to give a special thanks to the Beat for allowing individuals confined within four brick walls to express themselves in ways that they may perhaps not be used to, or were never given to opportunity to. I appreciate the support, advice and kind words you give our subscribers. I truly believe that your feedback is meant in a positive way, even if at times it may seem a little dole, keeping it real though everyone needs a little tough love every now and then.

Thanks also to all of the sponsors and supporters who make The Beat possible, and a special thanks to the readers and writers of The Beat, cause at the end of every issue, and that is the fact that it's all about YOU!

Heads up and down when you pray.  
 With much love and respect!



## Becoming a Man, Part 1

I can see your face I can hear your voice  
 I know you are there but I can't touch you  
 I can smell you put me to sleep at night  
 You wake me to eat  
 I need you I want you  
 I get mad at myself because I had a lot of times to say  
 what was on my mind  
 But I did not because I wasn't sitting right at that time  
 So I began to work hard, because playing was out the  
 window  
 It was time to get for real  
 Because I was out to get my angel, and that's for real  
 Dedicated to Che-Che.

## Too Much Time

Time, that's all I really have is time. Time to think about all the things I did wrong in one life, but then there are times when I can smile, these are the times. I'm thinking about you. Thanking the creator for the beauty he place on you, but there are times when I can sing like a bird. There are times when I'm blue as a little kid nose, because I can't have you in my arms.

## To The Beat Within

This is Mr. Lonesome. I have been reading my roommates, Beat Within paper, and I am like many, behind bars in Columbia Correctional Institution here in Florida. I have been reading many people like myself, pour out their hearts in moving poems or letters, and I have a message. I want to be heard by many of mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers that's down and out. They might think that no one can feel their pain, but I can feel it. If I can write something that can touch just one of them people I would be giving back my talent to the creator. I would also be righting some of the wrong I have done.

They haven't came, up with nothing like The Beat Within here, in Florida, because they want society to look at us as being good for nothing. But your paper hit those same people who turn their nose up at us with something real. We were just dealt a bad hand in life. We just needed a chance to put our feelings down, and your paper let's us do that and in a good way.

So I would love to let your readers read my work, or the person I become when I pick up my pen work. I want you guys to meet Mr. Lonesome because you guys will be seeing a lot of his work soon. Thank you! Guys for all of your hard work and I'll be waiting to hear from you in the near future. So keep your head up.

## The Baking of a Relationship

Making a relationship is just like baking a cake if something is missing in a cake is no going back to fix it, that can go to the same way with a relationship if something is missing in the beginning is no going back to fix it. And sometimes the whole relationship turnout bad, because cake don't taste good without sugar and the cake don't raise right without the eggs.

In the relationship the sugar is the two of you coming together and given to each other needs. I call that the sweet times because with that you have given yourself up to each other. The milk is you raising together strengthening the relationship that come from been real at all times, telling the truth and boating down to each others needs and wants and having respect for each others ways. The egg is the two of you not falling down to the little things of this world lust and money, and what's a cake without its icing.

The icing is the sweets of you having someone to shake yourself with and you can make a cake taste like you want it to taste by putting in a little of your soul as the flavor, and that's the two of you sharing oneself and becoming whole together. So go out and start finding that right person to make your cake with and who knows you might make them together.



## LEO RODRIGUEZ

### Gaged and trapped in this two man cell

Life in a box it's nothing but hell  
 How do this happen I ask myself why?  
 But I'm gonna thug to the heart so I never cry  
 But even thugs cry is what I hear  
 But I'm surrounded by gangsta cutthroats wit' no fear  
 So I hold my mug wit' a chip on my shoulder  
 But my heart grows cold as my world gets colder  
 Wasco State Prison is my new home  
 Only for a short minute until I parole  
 Been a gangsta all my life but my life is in shambles  
 Spend more time lockdown posted up in some shackles  
 I'd rather be free with Jordans on my feet  
 But I chose to gang bang and say screw the streets  
 And now I'm here stressin' lost everything I've gained  
 No money, no love, my heart is in chains  
 I'm 27 years young, been trapped since a very young teen  
 Behind these walls going on like thirteen  
 Group homes, the halls, camps to YA.  
 This life style we live is like modern day slavery  
 We get locked up to make these cops more gravy  
 Educate ourselves should be our war cry  
 Get money the right way let's open our eyes  
 One love to the youth.

Our next writer is writing to us from a correctional facility in Wasco, CA. Leo is light-weight new to The Beat Within magazine. Leo is taking big steps as he is trying to leave the gang life and start up a new chapter in his life in which he would like to let all you readers out there know that this isn't life/living. All you young folks out there are probably thinking like, I'm too young for something like that to happen to me, and we bet that we all don't picture ourselves being 30 or maybe even 40 years old and living in a small cell in the state pen. But guess what? If y'all keep going down that path that you're going down, then you will end up there. So just give Leo a read as he spreads his knowledge and love to us readers.

*I'd rather be free  
 with Jordans on my feet*

### Words Of Wisdom

My name is Leo Rodriguez. I'm 27 years old and been doing this for a minute. I've recently come across your magazine and was surprised at all the youth hungry for knowledge about life. I just recently dropped out from my gang as a Fresno Bulldog, and would like to help out any way I can to help youth stay away from this place. I would also like for you to send me an issue every week if possible just let me know the cost. Thank you



## New California Facilities (It Makes Sense)

I was reading a news article the other day and it stated that all felony suspects will be subject to DNA logging and placed into the criminal database until proven innocent. Now when and if the suspected felon gets proven innocent the file will get taken out of the database. If you believe the government as much as I do, you probably highly doubt this statement of removing the files. If I'm not mistaken, people are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty. This new law seems to me like the government is saying, "you're a criminal until proven otherwise." X-raided said it pretty good, "I'm guilty till proven innocent."

Why has this come about? To me it seems like its just another way for the government to keep control of the citizenry. More and more it seems like we are becoming a police state here in California. This law comes at the perfect time for a society where the criminal element is apparently growing and increasing. If I'm not mistaken, a survey came out a couple months ago stating that one out of every 100 males is incarcerated. The land of the free is quickly becoming the land of the incarceration.

Not only did this new law amaze me, but what also caught my attention was the \$10 million facility California is building to accommodate the supposed one million new DNA files they will be receiving on behalf of this new law-interesting. This facility is supposed to be completed in July of this year. I though we had a fiscal budget deficit of \$6 billion in this golden state for this year and just as bad next year? Maybe were not in a state of emergency financially. But the economy may say otherwise. This to me just shows where our countries heart is at. While the state cuts school funding, art programs, section eight funding, not to mention rehabilitation programs and all sorts of jobs, that can help lower criminal activity, we still continues to build facilities to either house incarcerated people or build the facilities to house the files and staff to incarcerate the people.

It amazes me also that the only solution they can find for the overcrowded judicial system is simply build more prisons. When we make more beds then those beds will be filed. It is illogical to think they will build facilities so they can sit vacant and unused, this simply won't happen. They say "why don't we move the inmates out of state?" 8,000 of the proposed out of state transfers will not even dent an 180,000 inmate population. This also to me seems like a counter productive move in rehabilitation. A major part of rehabilitation is creating a strong family home or ties to people who care in the community the inmate will be released to. If you move people out of state, how can they even fathom getting acquainted with a community miles away? A good example is my friend. He is doing a

Our next writer is writing to us from Solano County Jail in Fairfield, California. Tyler is not new to The Beat Within. He often drops knowledge and some game for all you readers out there. Tyler is a great writer that brings a lot of insight on life. In his upcoming piece he does a great job of bringing it to us raw and uncut and describing his emotions. He also has a piece on the prison system and his political views on Corporate America. So lend your ear for a second and give Tyler a read.

3 ½ year term at Soledad. They were talking about giving him a transfer to somewhere out east. All he has is our people and a family which can not travel. This transfer would destroy what little he has established for himself out here. This just does not seem like a proper solution to take him somewhere where he will have a minimal to no support system.

Recently, an expansion for the jail I'm housed in was not approved. The county wanted another 500 plus beds, at the cost of millions, to ease the overcrowding. This project would take a couple of years to construct and finance. On top of this long-term dilemma, the projected climb of inmates to be incarcerated in this county by the time the beds are made for exceeds the number of beds they plan to build. How does this make sense in a logical mind?

So, with a horribly overcrowded judicial system, coupled with a horribly under budgeted state government, what could be a solution? Why don't they try rehabilitating the inmate? Building beds doesn't fix the problem, it just creates space for more inmates.

I read in a book by Elliot Currie, called "crime and punishment," and it had a report about a survey they did with a group of inmates back east. They took a controlled group of inmates and split them into three sub-groups. One group just got sentenced to prison and was offered nothing but the cellblock. The second group was put in prison but given programs to help them with their specific needs in life to help them become better people. The third group was sent to prison, given programs and then sent to a good functioning half way house in a good community.

Guess what the recidivism, violation, rate was? For the first group it was above 75%. For the second group it was above 50%. For the third group it was around 25%. Now this to me sounds like it can work. A sad fact is a lot of people are re-offenders. See, we need to fix the problem where it begins not just deal with the after affects. But, hey, I'm an inmate too, so what do I know? We have no cure all for society and that is what society wants. Society is scared of the "criminal" because the government makes them that way. It goes back to control. They want to control a large group of the population, with fear and imprisonment. They make millions off the system, so why would those whose pockets are getting lined by locking people up want to stop? It makes sense.

## Who We'll Miss

Sitting back in the cell, got time to reminisce  
Thinking about all the times I spent  
All the times I went a miss  
D-millz, pops is gone  
Dennis is who we'll miss  
Was tight with the fam, till the drugs got out of hand  
Another story so sad  
Now I'm still locked down, coming up on three years  
I wasn't there for my brother  
I couldn't help dry his tears  
Now another boy is getting hit  
Got another man so sick

We was all real tight, now I pray for them at night  
Nothing for me to do, I sit back and wish it wasn't true  
Not to long ago my auntie sis went away  
I trust in god and know she found a better place to stay  
Life is to short, yet we steady wasting our days  
Since age of 12 I've been playing in this game  
Now I'm just barely coming of age  
22, life's been a daze  
As I sit in this cell, thinking about this life in jail  
I feel I fell for the lies, now I pay the price  
As my loved ones cried, as my loved ones died  
I couldn't be there to offer my hand  
I couldn't be there to play the man  
RIP Aunty, Sis, and Dennis.

## The Product of our Environment

We as the people and the kids that are growing up is the product of our environment. And just in case you readers don't know what I mean by the product of our environment. It's whatever kind of environment one come up in is violent. Then the young one's would grow up with a violent mindset. If these young one's grow up seeing their mother and father using drugs all the time. Then once these kids get old enough to do what kind of drugs they mother and father are using. They turn to using the same kind of drugs.

Feeling like ain't nothing wrong with using drugs because the ones the look up to use them. And they see how drugs are being used and sold all around the environment they are coming up in. And this is what helping the younger one's of today become the product of they environment. Always seeing they mother and father fighting each other. They would become the product of the things they environment produce to them. Unsafe sex, using drugs, drinking, violence, and carrying guns. Using guns for all the wrong reason. To kill and take from the hard working. So far the one's who have kids to raise up need to pay close attention to them. And the environment that they are brought up in.

*I knew what respect was.  
Because my mother and grand-  
mother had taught me some  
respect.*

## Respect

I hear talk about respect. Here in prison I hear all the time people talk all the time about they want respect. But they don't have any self-respect. And they don't have respect for the next man. And they don't have the slightest idea where respect comes from. And I can tell the way they carry them selves, and deal with those who are around them. That they don't have any self respect. But these are the same one's who demand respect from other. And I came to prison here in Florida in the year of 1985. It's been almost 23 years ago. And I was only 14 teens years old.

But even at that age I knew what respect was. Because my mother and grandmother had taught me some respect. And I saw how they use to treat and deal with people. So that somewhat gave me an idea as to what respect was. And when I first came to prison people had a lot of respect for each other. Of course you had some disrespect going on. But a lot of respect was always there amongst the officer and inmates. How am I suppose to respect went I don't know. I have been in the pen for 20 years this go around.

And over the years I have watched the respect drift away up out of the prison system. And it done got so disrespectful, unto doing time like this. Is very hard because all they understand is when I deal with them on they level. And that's a disrespecting level. They don't know how important it is to have great respect for everything and everyone.

Our next writer is writing to us from Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida. Michael McKinney is part of a small group of writers that consistently drop knowledge for all you young and old readers out there to soak up. So just make like a sponge and soak up some game from Michael!

## Being Apart Of My Pains

Being apart of me you must be willing to be apart of the pain I feel. You must understand that my pains are real. They been apart of me for so many years. Without my pains I would have never made it this far in life. My pains are what I have learned so much from. And they make me think twice. My pains make me look deeply into the past mistakes. I have stumble over time after time. And my pains are what makes me care, even when times are hard. And even when the hand that's been dealt to me is not fair. So if someone else is going to care for me, they have to be apart of my pains because they come along with me.

And you have people who want to be my friend. But they don't want to be friends with the pain I feel. Because sometimes my pains make me act out in a angry way. And people look at that in a bad. But my pains are real. They are something I will always feel. And I will always be willing to be apart of my pains because they remind me of what I have been through. They remind me of what I may have to go trough in the future. My pains are what I learn from. They teach me. They school me. They are my struggles. So being apart of me is being apart of my pains. Because is no way around them.

## I'm Not living Like That

My nickname is Mike Mike, and I have been incarcerated for the last 20 years. And I have more then life to spend in the Florida Prison System. And I'm saying all this to say a lot more things. Now I was sent back to Florida State Prison in the year of 1992. And at that time Florida prison was one of the most strict and locked down prison in the state of Florida. It's an all one-man cell prison. That house close management lock down convicts. And with the mindset I had some years back. When I was much younger, I was wild and did not to let the prison system break me. And I was not about to take no shhh from anyone else. I got into a lot of fights, always had run-ins with the prison guards. And things like this kept me locked down on close management.

Then in 1996 I was placed back on close management. And right now today I am still locked down on close management and has been for the last 12 and a half years. And I just live the way I had to live. I never use to use the saying I'm living like that. Or no one else's. But time has brought about a change in Florida State Prison. And has brought about a change in close management lock down at the East unit. It's a whole new wave mindset. And a whole new wave system. Because right here in close management I here all time from these new wave inmates. I'm living like that. I will kill you. I did this and that.

I'm on C.M. for jumping on a prison guard. I'm living that. And I hear this saying all the time from the young inmates who are on Close Management lock down I'm living like that. And these same inmates want even stand up for they rights in prison. But they always talking about how fights they done been in. and about all the ruthless things they done on the streets. And now tell myself I'm living like that. I see a lot in putting up a struggle to change my life. I don't want to keep living like that.

## Unite Our Youth

Greetings, people. Today I wish to share a bit more on way unity of our youth is so important, not only in this country but all over the world. The conflict we fight is not between black and white but between humanity and inhumanity. We must take note in the real sense of these words. This epidemic of hatefulness by racist America has an intentional and ironic meaning. It is a response to the visible strides our people have made in this society in the last 50 years.

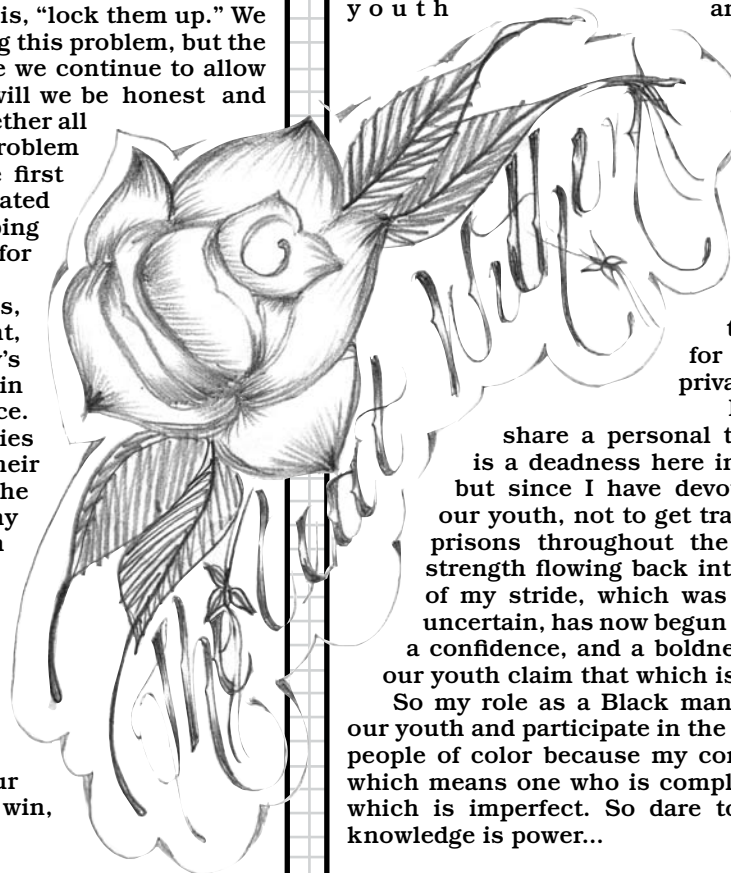
The point is simply this. People are not scared anymore. Generations, meaning our youth, have waged an ongoing struggle to force this country to reckon with our humanity because if we stop for a moment and take a look at the decades long harvest of strange fruit, America must reckon with the fact that their game to kill off our youth has ultimately failed, and also to render our communities silent and compliant to their rules, has also failed completely.

What is needed is that we target those who are flooding the prison system with our youth, while at the same time understand that the key to saving our youth is to empower them through education. The more uneducated and impoverished our youth are, the more America floods the prison system with our youth. People, there's an old adage, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, being our current legal system and penal institutions, but if we focus on unity and more dollars in real education, especially for our youth in our communities, we will reap greater rewards, which will be a significant reduction of funds to the penal system which houses 95% of our youth.

Putting our youth in prison was never meant to rescue the poor or enlighten the illiterate or make the sick well. America's action toward our youth is, "lock them up." We don't lack the knowledge for solving this problem, but the question we face is whether before we continue to allow America to lock away our youth, will we be honest and acknowledge the truth and put together all our resources to vanquish this problem that continues to give rise in the first place. By educating those incarcerated or not, we will ultimately be shaping our youth into positive role models for our youth and their communities.

Through my own life experiences, and as I sit in prison at the moment, I cannot only help salvage today's youth but be of great assistance in decreasing the urban gang violence. But most sadly in our communities the youth are throwing away their lives. If they are not going to the morgues, then it's to the many prisons throughout the U.S. in record numbers.

I was one of those youth in prison, but now at the age of 52 years I know we can and must put a stop to this. If not, once again we will lose another and another generation of youth. So, please, stop and unite; knowledge is power and the only way to save our youth. Dare to struggle, dare to win, which we can.



Anthony Baker, a writer very familiar to our pages, is writing to us from a correctional facility in Vacaville, CA. Anthony is writing with hopes to reach all you readers out there who are struggling with living that life that's only gonna keep you coming back to four walls. He has a few pieces he would like to share talking about unity and trying to save this generation. So listen up and give Anthony your attention as he delivers the messages from behind those walls loud and clear.

## Message from Behind the Wall

I'd like to paraphrase from the one, Devon Brown, a former head commissioner of the Department of Corrections in New Jersey. He stated that prisons of today are American new slave plantations. This is a very true fact of today's prison system.

Young people, the Department of Corrections in this country is warehousing people of color - men, women, and our children. With these so-called widespread sentencing laws and the disparities minorities face within the judicial system, the Department of Corrections and the contracted private corporations are making millions through decimation of people of color.

The Department of Corrections and the contracted private corporations are one of the main reasons why the revolving door, or recidivism, is spinning at such an alarming rate. Our youth must understand that the prison system is "Big Money" meaning crime and prisoners are needed for this industry to continually prosper financially. I speak these words to all the youth from behind prison walls. Here at Vacaville Prison, I seek to educate our youth through my own incarceration within the system at present.

Young people do not fall victim to the concrete coffins called the Department of Corrections. We must break through the culturally imposed prisons throughout the world; we must take the initiative to educate our youth and show them how to be

instrumental in reestablishing family values in all people of color, plus get back our pride, not as one but as a collective. The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams. Prison is not a place of dreams, but are cemeteries of terror and fear and profit for the world's contracted private corporations.

In closing, allow me to share a personal thought with you. There is a deadness here in prison that eludes me, but since I have devoted myself to educating our youth, not to get trapped in one of the many prisons throughout the world. I feel my life's strength flowing back into me. My step, the tread of my stride, which was becoming tentative and uncertain, has now begun to recover a definiteness, a confidence, and a boldness to stand up and help our youth claim that which is their birthright.

So my role as a Black man in prison is to educate our youth and participate in the social development of all people of color because my concept is complementary, which means one who is complete or make perfect that which is imperfect. So dare to struggle, dare to win, knowledge is power...



## Keep Your Head Up

The time that I wanted is my biggest regret  
 Spent in these places I'll never forget  
 Just sitting here thinking of things that I've done  
 The cryin', the laughin', the hurt and the fun  
 Can anyone see the cards I was dealt  
 All the shhh I've been through and the hurt I felt  
 I'm trapped in my body just wanting to run  
 Back to my youth with all its laughter and fun  
 I'm looking at much time and it's adding more stress in  
 my life

With reality suddenly in my face  
 I admit I'm scared and I'm stuck in this place  
 I feel like I'm trapped in these ghosted walls  
 How memories of my past flash through my head  
 I sometimes ask myself why and whence did I go wrong  
 I guess I was weak when I should have been strong  
 As I look back on my past so easy to see  
 The fear that I have, I was afraid to be me  
 Painted to be hardcore, so far, so cool  
 When actually lost like a blinded old fool

I'm tired of playin' this game  
 Of actin' hard with no sense of shame  
 But I know I can make it, though  
 I'm still in the strive  
 We've made it this far and still we keep our heads up  
 'Cause from what we seen, we are all we got  
 When you start to think otherwise  
 Keep in mind, life ain't easy  
 We can stand up against the best of the best  
 And rely on each other and even cry on each other  
 But remember, keep your head up, Baby.

### Unity (Part 2)

Our enemy can never be driven out by words alone,  
 no matter how sound the argument,  
 nor can the enemy be driven out by force alone;  
 but words of truth and justice fully backed by armed  
 power of knowledge  
 will certainly drive the enemy out.  
 When right and wrong are on the same side, what enemy  
 can hold out...  
 - these words are by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987.

## The Truth Hurts

If your reading this, it may be because your life style has been leading you to a dead end road. I've been down that path and crashed. At the age of 15 I was arrested for murder and given two life sentences for a crime I didn't do, (13) thirteen years later I'm now 28 years old and it's getting harder for lifers to get out of prison. Like some of you, I didn't take life serious, I didn't think "I" would ever get life in prison, I thought I was the exemption to the rule. But like people who get in car crashes none of us plan to crash in life. Life should be taken serious and thoroughly thought out. We all know drugs are bad for you, even alcohol can kill you, gang banging is plain and simple a game of Russian roulette with your life.

So why do we indulge in this behavior? This is what you have to ask yourself. It's a little late for me but you still have the chance to save yourself from yourself. When I was young, I didn't like myself a lot of the time, I was unsatisfied with family, financial instability, and my sloe ability to learn. But instead of confronting myself and trying to grow, I hid my low self-esteem in the false image of a gang banger and disguised my mental shortcomings under the influence of drugs, toppled with caring to much what other people thought of me.

At the age of 15 I didn't fully grasp the consequences of my actions. I was indifferent to other people's pain, nor did I understand the definition of the law, of how a small role in a crime can cost you the rest of you life, in what seemed like the blink of an eye. Some of you may not care about your life now, but the day "will" come when you make peace with yourself, it may take some time and some hard experiences but that day will come whether you're out there, or doing life in here, or on a wheel chair.

Why wait 'till it's to "analyze yourself" and understand why you "think", "act" and "like" the things you do. Are you A product of your environment, do you admire courage or compassion? Why? Perhaps you come from an ancestry of warriors like the Aztecs and have the misconception that to be brave and a modern day warrior is in your blood. If you want to fight a cause in life and have a sense of purpose, fight the cause of being a truth seeker. Don't be a follower, living in someone else's shadow, be unique, be yourself, but first you must confront your demons. That's the beginning of changing your life, is knowing yourself. Take it from a lifer. I've been there.

## WILLIE RAMIREZ

Our next writer is writing to us from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, Ca. We haven't heard from Willie in awhile as we lost contact with him for a couple of years. But he's back with some wisdom and knowledge. Willie is a lifer who wants to let all you readers out there know that if you keep going down that destructive path you might end up like him. Willie really comes from the heart in his piece and is really trying to reach out to all the youth out there. So we're gonna let Willie light weight introduce himself!

## To: The Beat Within

Greetings! My name is Willy Ramirez and I am interested in giving my advice and opinion from time to time in The Beat Within Magazine. It's been approximately (4) four years since I've read one of your magazines, I'm not even sure if you're still publishing.

I'm 28 years old and I've been incarcerated on this life sentence since the age of 15 for a gang related murder in which I was only present. A lot of teens are losing their lives to gangs and drugs, and the Judicial System doesn't seem to have a solution to the problem or often doesn't even care for our young lost children and are only concerned with their image of being hard on crime. Thus trying kids as adults, ruining futures or making them harder.

I wish I had someone who could have played a part in redirecting my life before I caught this sentence. I can only hope that I can influence the thinking of our troubled youth for the better and prevent another kid from getting life in prison.

*At the age of 15 I didn't  
 fully grasp the conse-  
 quences of my actions.*

## Is Oil the Motive for War?

America has come to a crossroad. You must understand that power is linked, in world politics, to oil. And, as the greatest industrial nation on Earth, America has an insatiable appetite for oil. When coal was the number one energy in the world, Great Britain ruled the world. She had the greatest deposits of coal. But, when the power to move engines moved from coal to oil, England and America began vying for control of the places on this earth that produce oil.

Who are the rogue states that America says does not like and let's see how oil is connected here. Consider Libya in North Africa. This little desert country, where most of the people live along the coast, has the sweetest crude oil. There's a song of the armed service branch of the U.S. Marine Corps that starts with the verse, "from the halls of Montezuma, to the shores of Tripoli." Where's Tripoli? "We will fight our country's battles on the land and on the sea." What are you doing over there? Did these people bother you? No. They have oil. America had military bases there. What for? Oil! They had a king named Idris and Muammar Gadhafi, as a young man in a bloodless coup, overthrew the king and then kicked the British out, the Americans out, and nationalized the oil. Now he could raise the standard of living of all the Libyans and with money left over he could aid the liberation struggle of people all over the world. America got highly upset with that.

"You're messing with us, our needs, and profits, Gadhafi. You're a terrorist." Iraq has a lot of oil and next door is Iran, which has lots of oil. In Iran, there was a man by the name of Mohammed Mossadeqh and he, like Gadhafi, also nationalized the oil. He also wanted the use of the oil to raise the living standards of the Iranian people.

What's wrong with that? There's nothing wrong with that to most people's eyes, but something was wrong with that in the eyes and corrupt greedy hearts of the rich and powerful. So they organized the coup and overthrew him and placed a man on the throne called the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. As that was their man in Iran, they gave him weapons, modern planes. Though he was a Muslim, he was not really deep into the Islamic religion. So, under him, the religion suffered; the people who wanted their religion to come back to purity started organizing. The leader of that was Imam Khomeini.

Look at the map of the Middle Eastern part of the world. In Saudi Arabia, there is a whole lot of oil. President Franklin D. Roosevelt struck up a good relationship with the king and ARAMCO (Arabian American Oil Company) had access to all this oil. The kings lived well, they did well for their people, but there was no democracy. America doesn't care anything about that, just keep pumping the oil.

Like junkies need their drugs, America is an oil junkie. She, like drug addicts, doesn't care how she gets it. She must have it. Did you know that they found the largest deposit of oil anywhere in the world? Yup. Guess where they found it...in the southern Sudan. And what America is trying to do is foster the revolution to break off the southern Sudan from the Islamic regime in Khartoum so that America can have access to the oil. But they say it's them Moslems killings Christians, making slaves of these people in the south. America sent arms to Eritrea and Ethiopia and Uganda. So all along the border of Sudan, war was started with Sudan. But something happened. Eritrea started using her weapons against Ethiopia and vice versa. So Eritrea and Ethiopia couldn't give the Sudan the trouble that America had wanted.

Herbert B. Schweigert, a regular contributor to The Beat from Crossroads Correctional Center in Cameron, MO, shares his views, faith, and creative work. Thanks, Herbert!

You don't know these things because you don't travel, you're not interested, because the foreign policy is not for the common American. And that we have to change. If the American people knew, foreign policy would reflect that which is better for the American people.

Let's go to Nigeria. There's some sweet oil here. Do you know what America tried to do? They tried to separate the eastern region and call it Biafra, which in turn started a civil war in Nigeria, causing thousands upon thousands of lives to be lost because of American foreign policy. Let's go back to Afghanistan. Do you see this place called Baku? Oil has been coming out of this area for years. But the Soviet Union had control of the oil in Kazakhstan, in Uzbekistan, and in Tajikistan. All this area the Soviet Union had.

Have you ever heard of Zbigniew Brzezinski? Zbigniew got us in trouble. He was the national security adviser under President Jimmy Carter. Guess what. Did you know that in the city of Kabul, Afghanistan, some twenty years ago the Muslims, women were in government. They were in school, they were in medicine. But something was wrong with Afghanistan. Do you know what was wrong? The government in Kabul leaned more toward the Soviet Union. They were Muslims, but they had a socialist leaning that America didn't like. So Zbigniew Brzezinski and American policy sent money into Afghanistan to destabilize the government in Kabul. When they brought up and paid for opposition to the government in Kabul, Russia (the Soviet Union) sent their troops into Afghanistan and the war began.

When the war started, Osama Bin Laden was in Arabia growing up. He loves Islam, he loves Muslims, he sees the Soviet Union taking over Afghanistan and there's war in Afghanistan to get the Soviet Union out and America says, "We're going to back those Muslim Mujahedeen." So American money and American weapons trained them and they drove the Soviet Union out after ten years of war, which left Afghanistan in total ruins. Then they look to America to help them, but America backed out and left them in that condition and a civil war broke out in Afghanistan. The country is already in ruins, now a civil war. Then you have the Taliban that comes to power and they want a pure Islamic state.

I read a book written by two Frenchmen called Osama Bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth and they said that early on in the Bush administration, he was negotiating with the Taliban. They wrote that the president said [the Taliban] were a source of stability. Why was he negotiating? Let me tell you. All of this, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, this is oil. And guess what...a company called UNOCAL (Union Oil Company of California) owns 75% of the oil up here. And what they wanted was a pipeline to come down through Afghanistan into Pakistan into the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, as an outlet for the oil of that area. The Taliban didn't agree.

Back in July an American representative met with the Taliban, sometimes in the UN, sometimes right in Peshawar, in Pakistan. The representative said either you accept a carpet of gold or we will bury you under a carpet of bombs. This was in July. Then came September 11th and now it's Osama bin Laden. The government didn't know anything about terrorists the day before. But on September 11th, 12th, and 13th, they suddenly have 19 faces in the paper saying these are the guys. When did you learn that? How did you learn that? Something is seriously wrong with this

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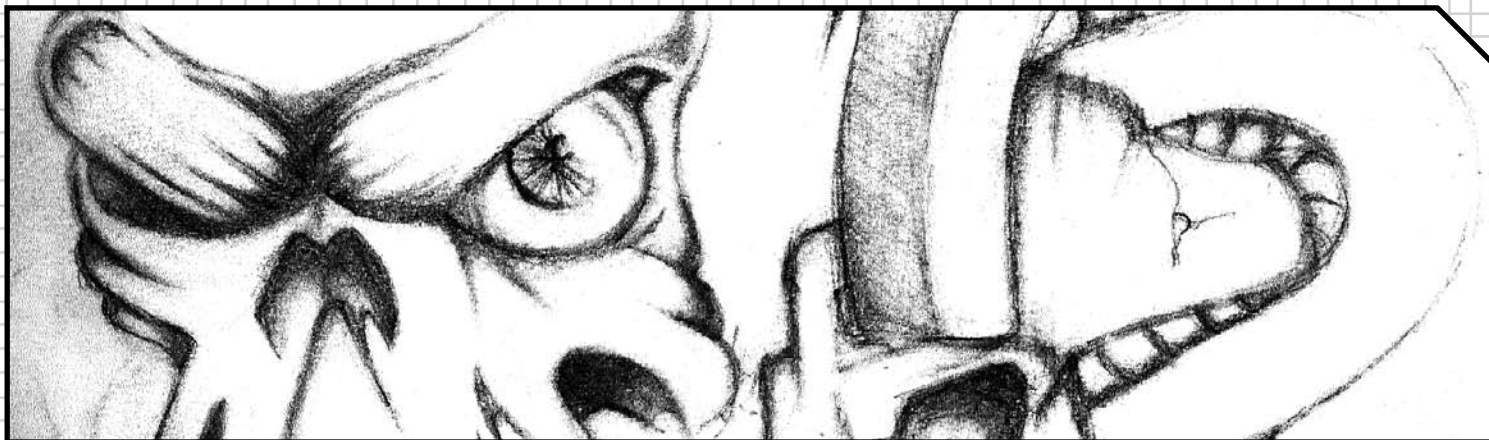
picture. Muslims and Arabs got all the blame and they went immediately to the Congress beating the drums of war.

Do you want to know why people in the world hate America? You don't understand people the dirt that goes on in your name. And that's why the American people have to be awakened. Am I upsetting? I'm not trying to upset you. This entire war has been and still is about oil. Now that they've destroyed the Taliban, Mr. Hamid Karzai, who America set up, now will get the carpet of gold and let's see if that pipeline won't come through Afghanistan. It's not about love and world peace, it's about greed, oil, and power.

This was in fact the president's true motive for war. The Bush agenda: invading the world, one economy at a time. The Bush Administration chose the Iraq sinkhole over public investment. The Iraq war is killing our economy. Our sons and daughters are dying and being maimed over

America's junkie-greed toward oil. We, the people, need to restore the Constitution and condemn these war profiteers and Congress for buying Bush's war.

Demonstrations like those of the March 19th Peace Movement are way overdue, direct actions must be taken every day targeting corporations and government officials profiting from or supporting this war. They are reaping millions of dollars in profits from the death and devastation in Iraq. Our country has been rocked to sleep and hijacked. Their actions are war crimes against humanity and crimes against peace. All the millions wasted funding these war crimes could have fed our hungry children, the homeless, fund homes for Katrina survivors, relieve families suffering from predator banks, provide jobs, education, health care, energy, housing, conservation, and paid down our national debt. American, enough is enough and there's been enough talk. Demonstrate 24 by 7.



## This is Where I Am

It was a dark, cold December morning at 3:30 a.m. 1979. I sat naked in a solitary confinement prison strip-cell wrapped in a blanket of my own self-pity and depression contemplating suicide, sitting with a burden that I, myself, had allowed the enemy (Satan) to place on my shoulders. All the pain I've caused my family and my victims, all the lies, deceit, lust, greed, selfish self-centeredness, bitterness, and unforgiveness altogether made one big heavy weight of sin upon my shoulders. As I sat there, a question, like so many times before, came to mind, "Where are you, God?"

I pondered the thought for a moment and then I heard the small, quaint voice from deep inside me, very small but yet large enough to radiate a great sense of love. The voice said, "This is where I am."

At that very instant a picture flashed in my mind like that of a thousand camera flashes all in one spot. The picture, as quick as it was there, was gone, but the horrible image it portrayed is still there even now, 29 years later.

It was a horrible and painful sight. A man, about my size, was nailed to a very rough-cut cross with spikes made of pure hate. The crown He wore was made from thorns filled with poisonous lies and anger. He was covered with blood from head to toe. His head was swollen twice its normal size. His flesh was ripped and torn like raw, bloody hamburger, what little was left hung from His bones like dirty rags. "This is where I am," the voice said again.

Again the huge flash upon my mind; it was the same image as before, but there was something new. I was now

there before the cross still wrapped in my depression and burning with my sins. I could no longer look at the cross. Now on my naked knees, I began to weep; I began to weep uncontrollably. Between sobs I could only speak four words--"Jesus, please forgive me." The voice comes again, "This is where I am."

The huge flash again, only much brighter now. I stand now with my back to the cross looking up with utter amazement. A light of pure love is shining on me. The Lord Jesus reaches down and sweeps His mighty hand over my burden of sins and they burst violently into a billion particles of fire and was gone. As I stood there still in awe, He takes His other hand with a pure white cloth and dipped it into the pool of blood at the foot of the cross and began to wipe my body with it like a mother bathes a newborn child. In a few moments His beautiful loving hands were gone. I then looked down at myself and noticed that I was clothed in the purest of pure fine white linen. So full of joy and with a great sense of freedom, I then turned to look back at the beautiful cross. Tears of great joy streamed down my face as I beheld the sight. There were my sins, along with millions of other people's sins and iniquity, nailed to the cross and covered by His precious blood. The voice comes again, "This is where I am."

This was the last cry from the Holy Spirit for me to come back, but I only wrote it and didn't hear it. But I can find comfort in it now. Listen always to the Spirit. Every time we sin we continue to nail Jesus to that cross!

A gift from my heart to my friends at The Beat Within and your loved ones!



*If you want to fight a cause in life and have a sense of purpose, fight the cause of being a truth seeker. Don't be a follower, living in someone else's shadow, be unique, be yourself, but first you must confront your demons. That's the beginning of changing your life, is knowing yourself. Take it from a lifer. I've been there.*

*read the rest of Willie Ramirez's BWO piece on page 57*

